THE QUEST *of* EL DORADO

J. A. ZAHM

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BOOKS BY J. A. ZAHM
(H. J. MOZANS)

THE QUEST OF EL DORADO

THROUGH SOUTH AMERICA'S SOUTHLAND

UP THE ORINOCO AND DOWN THE MAGDALENA

ALONG THE ANDES AND DOWN THE AMAZON

WOMAN IN SCIENCE

GREAT INSPIRERS

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THE QUEST OF EL DORADO

THE MOST ROMANTIC EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AMERICAN CONQUEST

BY

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"Where can it be—this land of El Dorado?"
"Over the mountains of the moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow."

POE.

ILLUSTRATED

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TO

MY CHERISHED FRIENDS

THE GRADUATES OF HOLY CROSS COLLEGE

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"There are epochs in which the reason is bewildered by the contemplation of new and unusual objects. And even the most clear-sighted man, when exposed to a continuous series of violent impressions, ceases to analyze them and descends to the level of common intelligences which exaggerate and marvel at everything. To comply with the precepts of the sage *nil admirari*, one must be in the full exercise of his faculties and have acquired a certain dominion over his senses which are always prone to bewitch and deceive him. How far were the Conquistadores of America from this state of intellectual calm? For them everything was matter for surprise. The spectacle of a new world, new peoples, new customs, and, more than all else, those inexhaustible fountains of riches which gushed forth everywhere with greater rapidity than their desire to possess them, maintained them in a sweet and perpetual ecstasy. Without taking opium, like the Mussulmans, they experienced the same sensations from which they could not free themselves without great effort." Pedro de Angelis, in "*Coleccion de Obras y Documentos Relativos a la Historia Antigua y Moderna de las Provincias del Rio de la Plata.*" Tom. I, p. V.

PREFACE

This little volume is made up almost entirely of a series of articles which I wrote[1] in 1912 for the "Pan-American Bulletin." Since then so great has been the interest excited in the subject discussed, especially in the United States and South America, that I have frequently been urged to republish the articles in book-form. They now appear with a few changes and additions and will, I trust, be found an acceptable contribution, brief though it is, on what is undoubtedly the most thrilling and romantic episode in the entire range of South American history. Only one other episode at all approaches it in fascinating interest and that relates to those countless expeditions which, as I have written in my recent work "Through South America's Southland," "started almost simultaneously from Buenos Aires, from Cordoba, from Valdivia, from Chiloe, all of them with the knowledge of the King of Spain, the Viceroy of Peru, and the governors of Chile and Rio de la Plata—expeditions which during nearly

[1] Under the pseudonym of J. A. Manso.

two and a half centuries scoured the whole of the continent from the Pilcomayo to the Strait of Magellan in search of that fabulous *Ciudad Encantada de los Cæsares*—The Enchanted City of the Cæsars—a city which according to the sworn statements of those who pretended to have been in it, was as vast and as rich as Nineveh of old, and greater in area than Pekin or London—a city that held within its carefully fortified walls all the delights of Eden and all the wonders of the New Jerusalem."

That the reader may better understand what were the views of the contemporaries of the Doradoists respecting the country which Belalcazar, the Quesadas, von Hutten, Berrio and Raleigh traversed and the strange Aborigines with whom they came in contact in their quest of the Gilded Man and the famed city of Manoa, I have illustrated the narrative with a number of engravings from the early publications of De Bry, Colijn and Gottfriedt—engravings which the people of the time were led to believe were perfect representations of the objects portrayed. And following the indications, often very vague and unsatisfactory, of the early chroniclers, I have endeavored to trace the routes followed by the divers expeditions in the futile search of that

fantastic, and ever-vanishing *ignis fatuus* which cost Spain thousands of lives and millions of treasure. But it will be impossible for the reader, guided solely by the maps and the narrative, to form an adequate idea of the dangers incurred and the difficulties surmounted by the Doradoists during their long wanderings over snow-clad mountains and through trackless and swampy wildernesses whose sole inhabitants were indigent, and frequently hostile, savages. Only those who have traversed the regions visited by the dauntless adventurers who took part in the expeditions described in the following pages can fully realize the magnitude of the task which they essayed, how heroically they served the Spanish Crown in the colonization of the vast regions which they so thoroughly explored and how greatly they made modern historians their debtors by the knowledge which they handed down to us respecting the manners and customs of many of the aboriginal tribes which long since have been extinct.

THE AUTHOR.

On-the-Hudson,
Riverside Drive,
New York.
April 21, 1917.

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THE QUEST OF EL DORADO

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CHAPTER I

CHIEF SOURCES OF INFORMATION RESPECTING EL DORADO

During a year's wanderings in Andean lands and in the valleys of the Amazon and the Orinoco I was frequently reminded of the numerous expeditions that centuries ago went in quest of that extraordinary will-o'-the-wisp, usually known as El Dorado—the Gilded King. Whether gliding down a Peruvian river in a dugout or traversing in the saddle the llanos of Venezuela and the lofty tablelands of Colombia, I found myself following the courses pursued by those

intrepid adventurers who while seeking a phantom did so much toward exploring that vast region of mountain and plain which lies between the Equator and the Caribbean. At one time I was in the footsteps of Gonzalo Pizarro and Von Hutten, at another in the wake of Ursua and Orellana. Now I was following the course taken by Belalcazar and his eager band, as they hurried across the Cordilleras in pursuit of the Gilded King; anon I was pushing my way through the dense and tangled forests which had been traversed by Ximenes de Quesada and his sturdy men, when in search of the great and peerless capital of the Omaguas; and still again I was sailing on the tawny waters of the Casanare and the Orinoco, which had witnessed the mad race of the fleets of Antonio de Berrio and Sir Walter Raleigh for the golden city of Manoa—for that

Imperial El Dorado, roofed with gold;
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of change,

All onset of capricious accident,
Men clung with yearning hope which would not die.

And yet, strange as it may seem, little is known about these expeditions that at one time commanded such universal attention in both the New and the Old World, and which for the historian still constitute the most romantic episode of the conquest of South America. One reason for this lies in the fact that the most authentic and elaborate accounts of these stirring enterprises are to be found only in the old Spanish chronicles, some of which are comparatively rare, while others, forgotten or unknown, have for centuries been buried in the dusty archives of Spain and Peru and have only recently been given to the press.

Among the most important of these chronicles are the "Noticias Historiales," of Fray Pedro Simon, a learned Franciscan friar, who wrote nearly three centuries ago, while some of the Conquistadores were still

living and while the memory of the events connected with the first expeditions in quest of El Dorado was still fresh in the minds of many of the survivors. Of scarcely less value are the "Elegias de Varones Ilustres de Indias" and the "Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada," by Juan de Castellanos, the poet-priest and historian of the conquest, who had served with distinction under Ximenes de Quesada in his celebrated campaign against the Muiscas and who knew personally many of the most celebrated of the adventurers who had taken part in the search for the Gilded King on the plateau of Cundinamarca and in the sultry lowlands of the Meta and the Guaviare. But the "Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada," of Castellanos, which contains the most graphic account of Ximenes de Quesada's expedition in quest of El Dorado, was not published until 1886. Similarly the manuscript containing the authentic narrative of Ursua's expedition to

Omagua and Dorado by Francisco Vasquez, who was one of the participants in the enterprise, remained in manuscript until it was published by the "Society of Spanish Bibliophiles" less than a third of a century ago. What, however, is still more remarkable, is the fact that the original *Relacion* of Gonzalo Pizarro's expedition in quest of the Gilded King—an expedition which is considered by some as the first of that long series of phantom-chases in which so many lives and so much treasure were sacrificed, was not published until 1894, more than three and a half centuries after it had been penned by its accomplished author, the Dominican, Fray Gaspar de Carvajal, who was at first the chaplain of Pizarro and subsequently that of Orellana, the immortal discoverer of the Amazon.

But although these and similar invaluable works bearing on the expeditions in quest of the Gilded King have appeared

in Spanish, comparatively little of the information contained in them has yet made its way into English. This explains the numerous errors that are found in what has hitherto been written on the subject and why many adventurers like Antonio Sedeno, Diego de Ordaz, Nicolas Federmann, and others of their contemporaries are classed among those who sought for El Dorado when, as a matter of fact, these treasure-seekers had not even heard of this mythical personage. To the earlier adventurers, like those just named, the *auri sacri fames*—the accursed thirst for gold—was indeed as strong a lure as it was to their successors, but they confined their operations chiefly to rifling the temples and cemeteries of the aborigines or to seeking a certain *Casa del Sol*—temple of the sun—that was supposed to exist somewhere east of the Andes, presumably in the valley of the Meta.

It is a pity that those who love the curi-

ous and romantic phases of history have not given more attention to the interesting episode of El Dorado. An exhaustive and authoritative work on the subject, one which shall embody the results of the most recent researches in Spain and Latin America, is certainly a desideratum in the history of the conquest and exploration of the northern portion of our sister continent. For the years devoted to the quest of the Gilded King were not only "years crowded with incident, streaked with tragedy, stained by crime, darkened by intrigue," but they were also years during which the amazing audacity, the matchless prowess, and the thrilling heroism of the Conquistadores were seen at their best. And the study of these years will show that the prime mover of the Spaniards in their extraordinary adventures was not a thirst for gold, as is so often asserted, but a love of glory and a sense of patriotism which impelled them to make sacrifices and

to undertake enterprises before which even the bravest men of our degenerate age would recoil with horror. So marvelous, indeed, were their achievements that, were they not attested by the most unquestionable of documents, we should be disposed to place the old chronicles which describe them in the same category as the Arthurian romances, and to regard the exploits of some of the members of the chief expeditions as no more deserving of credence than the glorifying myths of El Cid Campeador. Even today, as he slowly pursues his lonely course through the dark forests which fringe the Orinoco and the Amazon, or scales the precipitous flanks of the lofty Cordilleras, the traveler feels the spell of romance and can easily dream of the gorgeous capitals and mighty empires, whose glamour in days gone by proved such an attraction to thousands of the most gallant and noble spirits of the Spanish conquest.

CHAPTER II

EXPEDITION OF SEBASTIAN DE BELALCAZAR. CONFLICTING REPORTS REGARDING EL DORADO

It was in 1535 that a roving Indian first told the Spaniards the story of the gilded chieftain to whom they forthwith gave the name El Dorado—the Gilded Man or King—a name which was subsequently applied not only to the gilded chief himself, but also to the city wherein he was supposed to reside, and to the province over which he bore rule, and to the lake on which his capital was said to be located. At that time Sebastian de Belalcazar, the lieutenant of Francisco Pizarro, was in Quito, whither he had gone after his victorious campaign against the generals of Atahualpa, and here it was, according to Castellanos, where—

An alien Indian, hailing from afar,
Who in the town of Quito did abide,
And neighbor claimed to be of Bogatá,
There having come, I know not by what way,
Did with him speak and solemnly announce
A country rich in emeralds and gold.

Also, among the things which them engaged,
A certain king he told of who, disrobed,
Upon a lake was wont, aboard a raft,
To make oblations, as himself had seen,
His regal form o'erspread with fragrant oil
On which was laid a coat of powdered gold
From sole of foot unto his highest brow,
Resplendent as the beaming of the sun.

Arrivals without end, he further said,
Were there to make rich votive offerings
Of golden trinkets and of emeralds rare
And divers other of their ornaments;
And worthy credence these things he affirmed;
The soldiers, light of heart and well content,
Then dubbed him El Dorado, and the name
By countless ways was spread throughout the world.[1]

[1] "Elejias de Varones Ilustres de Indias," Parte III, Canto II, Madrid (1850).

From Herrera's "Historia de las Indias Occidentales"

THE ADELANTADO, SEBASTIAN BELALCAZAR

The first of the Conquistadores to go in search of the Gilded Man

According to the chronicler, Juan Rodriguez Fresle, who was a son of one of the Conquistadores of New Granada, the lake on which were made these offerings of gold and emeralds, was Guatavitá, a short distance to the northeast of Bogotá. And the source of his information respecting the nature of the ceremonies connected with these offerings was, he assures us, no less than one Don Juan, the cacique of Guatavitá, who was the nephew of the chief who bore sway at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards under Ximenes de Quesada, and who was even then preparing himself by a six years' fast to succeed his uncle as cacique of Guatavitá. After this long fast, which was made under the most trying conditions, the successor to the caciqueship was obliged to go to the Lake of Guatavitá and offer sacrifice to the Devil, who, Fresle informs us, was regarded by the aborigines as their god and master. After being stripped, he was

anointed with a viscous earth, which was then overspread with powdered gold in such wise that the chief was covered with this metal from head to foot. He was then placed on a balsa provided with a great quantity of gold and emeralds, which he was to offer to his god. Arriving at the middle of the lake, which was surrounded by a vast multitude of men and women, shouting and playing on musical instruments of various kinds, he made his offering by throwing into the lake all the treasure which he had at his feet. After this ceremony was over, he returned to the shore where, amid acclamations, music and rejoicing, he was received as their legitimate lord and prince.

"From this ceremony," our author continues, "was derived that name, so celebrated, of 'El Dorado,'—which has cost so many lives and so much treasure. It was in Peru that this name 'Dorado' was first heard. Sebastian de Belalcazar, having met

From De Bry

BLOWING GOLD DUST ON AN INDIAN CHIEFTAIN AFTER HIS BODY HAD BEEN ANOINTED WITH BALSAM

near Quito an Indian from Bogotá, who told him about the Gilded Man just described, exclaimed 'Let us go in search of that gilded Indian.' " [2] Hence the report of El Dorado was spread throughout Castile and the Indies, and Belalcazar was moved to go in quest of him as he did, and hence also the cause of that celebrated meeting with Quesada and Federmann, which constitutes one of the most thrilling and dramatic chapters in the history of the conquest of New Granada.[3]

I am aware that certain recent writers on El Dorado are disposed to give slight credence to Fresle's account of the Gilded Man, and that, following the indications of a specious theory, they attach little, if any, more

[2] "Conquista i Descubrimiento del Nuevo Reino de Granada de las Indias Occidentales del Mar Oceano i Fundacion de la Ciudad de Santa Fé de Bogotá." Cap. II, Bogotá (1859.)

[3] See the Author's "Up the Orinoco and Down the Magdalena," p. 294 et seq. New York (1909).

value to the statements of Castellanos and Padre Simon, who, as a matter of fact, are our chief and best authorities on this interesting topic. The quotation above given from Juan de Castellanos they characterize as a mere poetical fancy. Holding such views, they naturally find fault with Humboldt for having spread broadcast the error, as they regard it, concerning the connection between El Dorado and Lake Guatavitá—an error, they assert, into which the great German savant was led by conceding undue authority to what the historian of Granada, Bishop Piedrahita, writes on the subject.[4] Plausible as they are, however, the

[4] Cf. "El Dorado, Aus der Geschichte der ersten Amerikanischen Endeckungs-Reisen. Separat-Ausdruck aus den Mittleilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Hamburg" (1889); "Historia General de las Conquistas del Nuevo Reino de Granada," Lib. VI, Cap. III, por D. Lucas Piedrahita, Antwerp (1688); "The Gilded Man," by A. F. Bandelier, New York (1893); "Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America during the Years

LAKE GUATAVITÁ

Showing the cut made by Sepulveda, a rich merchant of Bogotá, who in 1562 received from Philip II a concession to drain the lake in order to secure the great treasures supposed to exist at the bottom. Quite recently an English company having a concession from the Colombian Government succeeded in completely draining the lake and found the bottom covered with a deposit of mud about 3 meters in thickness. It will be necessary to carefully wash this in order to determine what treasures, if any, are contained in it. According to the latest report available, only a few beads, ceramic and gold objects have so far been found. The lake is almost circular in outline, with a diameter of about 300 meters, and was, at the time of the Conquistadores, about 50 meters in depth.

reasons of these writers for rejecting the testimony of such veracious and conscientious chroniclers as Fresle, Padre Simon, Castellanos, and Piedrahita are far from conclusive, and most readers who will take the trouble to consult what these four writers have to say on the matter in question will, I think, agree with Humboldt and be satisfied that the accounts given of El Dorado by the early chroniclers named are founded on facts that can not be gainsaid.

The fact that only a few years after the arrival of Belalcazar at Bogotá, the Spaniards began to make efforts to secure the gold and precious stones which, according to tradition, had been cast into the sacred Lake of Guatavitá by the Gilded King, is evidence that the statements of Fresle and other contemporary writers regarding the connection between this lake and El Dorado

1799-1804," by Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, Vol. III, Chap. XXV, Bohn edition.

are substantially true. For more than three centuries many attempts were made to drain the lake, with a view to securing the priceless treasures which were supposed to be spread over its bottom, but the success which attended the efforts of those who had the matter in charge was only partial. There were never sufficient funds available to complete the work of drainage until a few years ago, when the attempt was again made by some Englishmen, who are still engaged in the undertaking. But a number of gold objects were found, among them some interesting figurines, which confirmed many people in the belief which they had before entertained regarding the existence of untold amounts of gold and precious stones at the bottom of the lake, the offerings of El Dorado to his god before the Spanish Conquest, and which convinced them of the accuracy of the accounts of the early chroniclers regarding the ceremonies performed

THE CACIQUE OF GUATAVITÁ, SURROUNDED BY INDIAN PRIESTS, ON A BALSA WHICH CONDUCTED HIM, ON THE DAY OF OBLATION, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE

This object is made of gold, weighs 262 grams, and measures 9½ centimeters in diameter. It was found in Lake Siecha, some miles distant from Lake Guatavitá, and is in the possession of a gentleman of Bogotá.

here centuries ago, in which the Gilded Man was the chief actor.[5]

According to Padre Gumilla the word "Dorado" had a different origin from that assigned by Fresle and Castellanos. It originated, declares this writer, on the Caribbean Coast near Cartagena and Santa Marta, whence it passed to Velez and thence to Bogotá. When the Spaniards reached the elevated plain of Cundinamarca, they learned that "El Dorado was in the pleasant and fertile valley of Sogamoso." On reach-

[5] Special mention should here be made of a most interesting find made in 1856 in Lake Siecha, a small body of water near Lake Guatavitá. It consists of a small group of figures of men on a raft, all of gold, and weighing 268 grams, which, in the opinion of competent archeologists, represents El Dorado on a rush balsa surrounded by his priests as he proceeded to the center of Lake Guatavitá to offer sacrifice to his god. See "El Dorado—Estudio Historico, Etnografico y Arqueologico de los Chibchas, Habitantes de la Antigua Cundinamarca," p. 11, por Dr. Liborio Zerda, Bogotá (1883).

ing this place they found that the priest who made his oblation in the great temple there was wont to anoint at least his hands and face with a certain kind of resin over which powdered gold was blown through a hollow reed or cane. From this circumstance the famous "Dorado" took his name.[6]

Those who reject the accounts above given regarding El Dorado declare that the first authentic information we have of him is contained in a letter, dated January 20, 1543, of Gonzalo Fernando de Oviedo y Valdes to Cardinal Bembo, in Venice. This letter refers to the celebrated expedition of Gonzalo Pizarro to the land of Canela—cinnamon—which was on the eastern versant of the Cordilleras and but a few days' journey from Quito. The ostensible object of the expedition, as announced by Pizarro,

[6] "Historia Natural, Civil y Geografica de las Naciones Situadas en las Riveras del Rio Orinoco," Tom. I, Cap. XXV, 3, Barcelona (1791).

was to find the region which was reputed to be as rich in aromatic shrubs and trees as the spice islands of the Orient. If this could be found the fortunes of the leader and his companions would be assured, and Spain would be independent of her hated rival, Portugal, which then had a monopoly of cinnamon and other precious spices. But the real object was not so much the discovery and conquest of the land of Canela[7] as the quest of a great and powerful prince who was called El Dorado.[8]

"When I ask, [writes Oviedo] why they call this prince the Gilded Cacique or King,

[7] Cinnamon is actually found in this and other parts of tropical America, but it belongs to a different genus from that of Ceylon, which supplies the well-known article of commerce.

[8] Gonçalo Piçarro, determinó de yr á buscar la canela é á un gran principe, que llaman El Dorado, de la requeça del qual hay mucha fama in aquellas partes. "Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Islas Y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano," Tom. IV, Lib. XLIX, Cap. II, Madrid (1851).

the Spaniards who have been in Quito or have come to Santo Domingo—and there are at present more than ten of them in this city—make reply that from what they hear respecting this from the Indians, this great lord or prince goes about continually covered with gold as finely pulverized as fine salt. For it seemeth to him that to wear any other kind of apparel is less beautiful, and that to put on pieces or arms of gold stamped or fashioned by a hammer or otherwise is to use something plain or common, like that which is worn by other rich lords and princes when they wish; but that to powder oneself with gold is something strange, unusual, and new and more costly, because that which one puts on in the morning is removed and washed off in the evening and falls to the ground and is lost. And this he does every day in the year. While walking clothed and covered in this manner his movements are unimpeded, and the graceful pro-

portions of his person, on which he greatly prides himself, are seen in beauty unadorned. I would rather have the chamber besom of this prince than the large gold smelters in Peru, or in any other part of the world. Thus it is that the Indians say that this cacique, or king, is very rich and a great lord, and anoints himself every morning with a very fragrant gum or liquor and over this ointment he sprinkles powdered gold of the requisite fineness, and his entire person from the sole of his foot to his head remains covered with gold, and as resplendent as a piece of gold polished by the hand of a great artificer. And I believe, if this cacique uses this, that he must have very rich mines of a similar quality of gold, because I have seen much in *tierra firme* of the kind called by the Spaniards *volador,* and so fine that one could easily do with it what is above stated." [9]

[9] "Historia General y Natural de las Indias," Tom. IV, p. 183.

From the foregoing it is seen that there were at the time of the arrival of the Conquistadores in South America three different reports in circulation among the Indians regarding the mysterious personage whom the Spaniards, from the descriptions given of him by their informants, agreed in calling El Dorado, an abbreviation for *El Hombre o Rey Dorado*—the Gilded Man or King.

That they should have heard of him in different places widely separated from one another is not surprising when we remember that the Indians of Darien and Costa Rica, long before Francisco Pizarro's advent in Peru, were aware of the wealth and the power of the Incas in the remote south. And that there should have been different accounts regarding the character and place of abode of this marvelous savage is what might have been expected by one who knows how prone Indians are to exaggerate,

or to modify what they have heard so as to suit their own fancy.

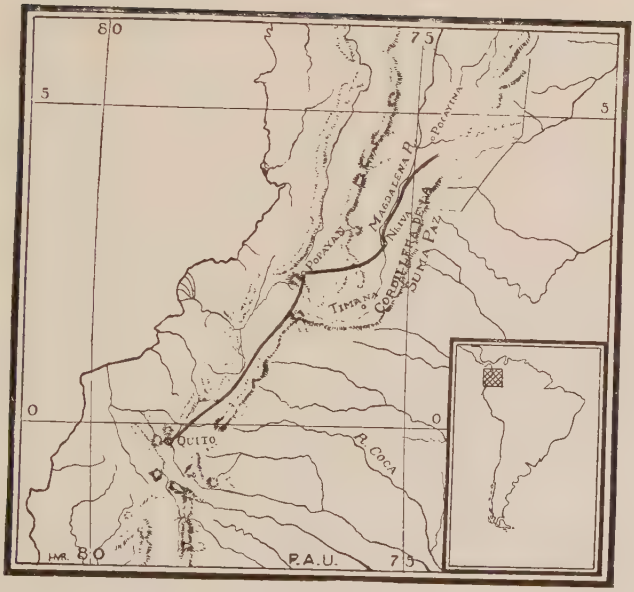
It was not, then, surprising that the Spaniards should have been misled by these divers and alluring reports. After the successes achieved by their countrymen in Mexico and Peru, and after the millions of treasure which had been found in the lands of the Aztecs, Chibchas, and Incas, they were prepared for anything. Nothing seemed impossible, and no tale about gilded men or golden palaces was so extravagant as to be rejected by them as false. They were ready to give full credence to even greater fictions than the Golden Fleece or the Apples of the Hesperides, and would not have been surprised to find Ophir or Tarshish in the valleys of the Orinoco or the Amazon. The spirit of adventure and romance dominated everyone not only in the Indies but in the mother country as well.

"For all this Spanish nation [writes an old

chronicler] is so desirous of novelties that what way soever they bee called with a becke only or soft whispering voyce, to anything arising above water, they speedily prepare themselves to flie and forsake certainties, under hope of an higher degree, to follow incertainties, which we may gather by that which is past."

It was a vague and fantastic rumor like this that lured Belalcazar from Quito to the Sabana of distant Bogotá, where he met Quesada and Federmann.[10] According to the Indian from whom the Spanish chieftain received his information, the Province of El Dorado was called Cundirumarca, and was not more than 12 days' distant from Quito. This distance, if the Indian's statement was true, would preclude the plain of Bogotá as the home of the Gilded Man, for it was impossible to reach this place in so limited a time. Besides, Cundirumarca is a

[10] See Appendix.



ROUTE FOLLOWED BY SEBASTIAN DE BELALCAZAR IN QUEST OF EL DORADO

Quichua word, and could not, it is asserted, have been the name of a province in New Granada, where the language of the Incas was unknown. Despite, therefore, the positive statement of Piedrahita that the motive of Belalcazar's expedition to the north was the discovery of El Dorado and the House of the Sun, it may be that the real reason was the desire on the part of Pizarro's lieutenant to cut loose from his chief and find a country of which he might himself become the *adelantado*. Subsequent events and the realization of his desire to be appointed governor of Popayan give color to this surmise.

Whether, however, Belalcazar misunderstood his informant regarding the location of the Province of Cundirumarca, or whether he was merely looking for a pretext for escaping from Peru, where he was overshadowed by Pizarro, it is certain that the next expedition in search of El Dorado, by some considered the first genuine expe-

dition in quest of the Gilded King, was headed for the eastern slopes of the Andes instead of for the northern plateau of New Granada. The country of the Gilded King, it was now thought, was in the vicinity of the "Land of Cinnamon," and preparations were forthwith made to add these rich lands to the possessions of the Spanish Crown.

CHAPTER III

EXPEDITIONS OF GONZALO PIZARRO AND FRANCISCO DE ORELLANA

The leader of this expedition was the famous Conquistador, Gonzalo Pizarro, a half brother of the conqueror of Peru. Toward the end of February, 1541, six years after Belalcazar had left for New Granada, Pizarro started eastward at the head of what was then considered a large and well-equipped force of men—one much larger than that at the disposal of Francisco Pizarro when he captured Atahualpa and gained possession of the great Inca empire.

According to Zarate, he had under his command five hundred Spaniards, one hundred of whom were mounted, and four thou-

sand Indians. One item of the commissary department was three thousand—Herrera makes the number five thousand—swine and llamas, which latter were called by the Spaniards *ovejas del Peru*—Peruvian sheep. Pizarro evidently took the Indian literally when he spoke of the ruler of Cundirumarca as a powerful lord, and he, accordingly, started on his undertaking well equipped and prepared for a long and vigorous campaign.

The enterprise that was begun with such careful preparation and with such high hopes was doomed, so far as its immediate object was concerned, to have a disastrous termination, for scarcely had those taking part in it reached the fastnesses of the Andes, but a few miles distant from Quito, when their difficulties began. The intense cold and the piercing winds which they encountered in crossing the formidable barrier of the eastern Cordillera caused untold suf-

Climbing the Andes in a Downpour

fering and occasioned the death of many of the Indians. Then, to add to their hardships, they experienced one of those frightful earthquakes which are so frequent in this land of terrible volcanoes. This was succeeded by a torrential downpour, by thunder and lightning, which seemed to portend all the dire calamities that thereafter ensued. This deluge continued unabated for weeks and so saturated the soil that progress became almost impossible. The adventurers were surrounded by swollen streams, dangerous morasses, and by forests and thickets so dense that they had to hew a way by axes and machetes. Drenched with incessant rains that spoiled their food and equipment, rotted their garments, and, as the chronicler Molina expresses it, "baptized their very souls," they were soon confronted with starvation. Their live stock, including even their horses and dogs, had been consumed, and they were reduced to

subsisting on such edible fruits and herbs as they could find in the forest.

But pressed as they were by hunger and spent by toil so that they could scarcely move, these determined men of blood and iron still persisted in their course. They found the land of cinnamon, but, as they had set out in quest of El Dorado, they were loath, notwithstanding the countless difficulties which beset their path, to desist from their undertaking. In order to make better headway, Pizarro resolved to construct a brigantine. Under the circumstances this was a Herculean task, for he had neither the materials nor the necessary workmen. But nothing daunted, the much-needed craft was begun without delay. "For iron," Zarate informs us, "they used the shoes of their dead horses, and in lieu of pitch they availed themselves of a gum which was distilled by the trees there, and for oakum they made use of the old garments of the Indians or

the shirts of the Spaniards, which had been rotted by the excessive rains—each contributing what he was able." [1] This vessel, which was constructed under such adverse conditions, was remarkable not only as being the first floated on these inland waters by Europeans, but also as the one that was soon afterward utilized in making one of the most notable voyages recorded in the annals of discovery. For it was the *San Pedro*—this was the name of the brigantine—that enabled Orellana, Pizarro's lieutenant, to discover the mighty Amazon, and that with the *Victoria,* which was built after the *San Pedro,* carried the leader and his intrepid companions in safety to the island of Cubagua, north of the coast of Venezuela.

This is not the place to discuss what has

[1] "Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista de la Provincia del Peru," Lib. IV, Cap. III, Amberes (1555).

been called Orellana's treason to his chief,[2] who, finding himself abandoned by his lieutenant, after he had been sent in search of provisions, suddenly found himself forced to return to Quito or starve in the wilderness with his remaining survivors. Nor shall I weary the reader with a recital of the hardships and sufferings of Pizarro's heroic band during their long and painful march homeward. Frequently they faced starvation in its direst form, and at times they had nothing to appease the gnawings of hunger but the leather of their saddles and sword belts. Outside the scant sustenance which they found in an occasional Indian settlement,

[2] See the author's "Along the Andes and Down the Amazon," Chap. XXIII, New York (1911); also "Descubrimiento del Rio de las Amazonas segun Relacion hasta ahora inedita de Fr. Gaspar de Carvajal, con otros documentos referentes a Francisco de Orellana y sus companeros," por José Toribio, Medina, Sevilla (1894), and "La Traicion de Un Tuerto," por Ximenes de la Espada en "La Illustracion Española Y Americana (1892-1894).

their ordinary fare consisted of such fruits, herbs and roots as they came across in their march through the tangled forest. When these were wanting they were forced, as Garcillaso de la Vega tells us, to eat toads, snakes, and other reptiles equally repulsive.

At length, in June, 1542, after an absence of about sixteen months, "the way-worn company reached the elevated plain of Quito. But how different their aspect from that which they had exhibited on issuing from the gates of the same capital, nearly a year and a half before, with high romantic hope, and in all the pride of military array."

Zarate writes: [3]

"The whole party from the general to the private soldier, was almost entirely naked, as, from the almost continual rains to which they had been exposed, and the other hardships of their journey, their clothes were all

[3] Op. cit. Lib. IV, Cap. V.

rotten and torn to rags, and they were reduced to the necessity of covering themselves with the skins of beasts. Their swords were all without scabbards and almost destroyed with rust. Their legs and arms were torn and scratched by the brushwood, thorns and brakes through which they had traveled, and the whole party was so pale, lean, and worn out with fatigue and famine that their most intimate acquaintances were hardly able to recognize them. Among all their privations what they felt the most insufferable was the want of salt, of which they had not been able to secure the smallest supply for above two hundred leagues.

"On arriving in the kingdom of Quito, where everything they stood in need of was brought to them, they knelt down and kissed the ground as a mark of gratitude and satisfaction, and returned thanks to God for their preservation from so many dangers. Such was their eagerness for food, after so long

famine, that it became necessary to regulate their supply and only allow them to eat but little at a time till their stomachs became accustomed to digest their food."

For courage and constancy in the midst of untold hardships and dangers the expedition of Gonzalo Pizarro was truly remarkable. The intrepid adventurers composing it had to contend at every step with a gigantic and invincible enemy—rude and savage nature with all its powerful elements of destruction. And were it not for the results of the expedition, and the names of places recorded by historians, one would be inclined to regard the story of this matchless achievement as a fantastic tale without foundation in fact. Indeed, when we contemplate the valor and daring of Pizarro and his companions, their resistance to fatigue in unheard-of hardships, we are disposed to think that the men of their day were

of a different mold from those of our own.

During this expedition the Spaniards, says Gomara, "traveled four hundred leagues, the entire distance through a pathless wilderness." Of the two hundred and more that started on it less than one hundred returned to Quito, and among them there was not a single one of the four thousand Indians who had accompanied them on their departure.[4]

And what was the net result of this expedition? Outside of the discovery of the Amazon by Orellana, which was incidental, it was virtually *nil.* The adventurers found, it is true, the land of cinnamon, but the trees bearing the precious bark were so few and widely separated, and so far away from means of transportation, that they were practically valueless. Beyond certain vague

[4] "Historia de las Indias," Cap. CXLIII: "No bolvieron cien Españoles de doscientos i mas que fueron; no bolvio Indio ninguno de quantos llevaron."

rumors of a rich and powerful chief living somewhere between the Amazon and the Rio Negro they could secure no information regarding the Gilded King and the province of gold that were the objects of their quest. And what seems passing strange is that Padre Carbajal, the chronicler of Orellana's expedition, makes no mention whatever of El Dorado, although he must have known that it was this mysterious character that Gonzalo Pizarro had chiefly in view when he left Quito for the land of Canela. Aside, then, from their value to geographical science the expeditions of both Pizarro and Orellana were as barren of the results sought as was that of Belalcazar a few years before.

But failure on the part of these three gallant leaders, and the recital of the terrible sufferings and hardships which had been endured by those who had taken part in the first enterprise, did not discourage others or deter them from essaying to achieve suc-

cess where their luckless predecessors had failed. The vague and conflicting reports about the rich and powerful tribe of Indians east of the Andes and north of the Amazon, called the Omaguas, were sufficient to determine the organization and equipment of new expeditions without delay, the aim of all of which was to discover the ever-alluring and ever-elusive El Dorado.

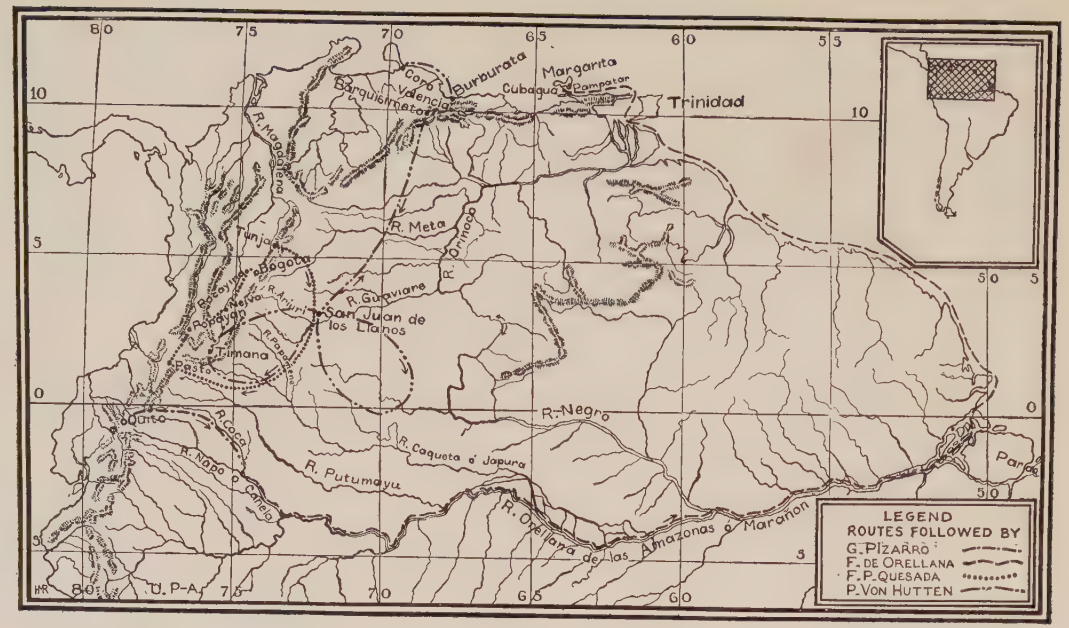
CHAPTER IV

EXPEDITIONS OF FERNAN PEREZ DE QUESADA AND PHILIP VON HUTTEN

Even before Orellana had embarked for Spain to seek the governorship of the region he had discovered, another expedition in search of the Gilded Man was nearing its termination. This was under the command of Fernan Perez de Quesada, who, like so many others, had been captivated by the glowing accounts of El Dorado's riches given him by the soldiers of Belalcazar and resolved forthwith to abandon the comforts and luxuries, which, as governor of New Granada, he enjoyed during the absence in Spain of his brother Gonzalo, and go in pursuit of a flitting phantom. This enterprise, counting more than two hundred and fifty men and having full two hundred horses,

was begun at Tunja, north of Bogotá, in September, 1545. The adventurers, after crossing the eastern Cordillera and reaching what are now known as the llanos of Colombia, advanced toward the south, with the *sierras* on their right and the broad grassy plains of the lowlands on the left. Their hardships and sufferings in the wilderness from lack of food were appalling enough, but they were still more intensified by the incessant rains and by the frequent attacks of savage Indians. They eventually succeeded in reaching the headwaters of the Caqueta and in penetrating even the land of Canela, which had but a short time previously witnessed the homeward march of Gonzalo Pizarro and his helpless band. Quesada's expedition, like Pizarro's, lasted sixteen months,[1] during which he lost eighty

[1] Oviedo y Baños, in his "Historia de la Conquista y Poblacion de la Provincia de Venezuela," Tom. I, p. 152, says two years.



ROUTES FOLLOWED IN THE QUEST OF EL DORADO

men and all his horses. And like his ill-starred predecessor, he had nothing to show for his enormous expenditure of energy and courage but a depleted purse. And withal, El Dorado was still as far away from the eager, expectant Spaniards as ever.

While Quesada was cutting his way through the impenetrable jungles of the *montaña,* another expedition was organizing at Coro, in northwestern Venezuela, under Philip von Hutten, a relative of the Welsers, the rich German bankers of Augsburg, who then held from the Emperor Charles V a large concession of land in Tierra Firme and who were bent on securing a part of the vast treasures reported to be in the territory ceded them by the Spanish monarch. Previous expeditions had been sent out by representatives of this company, among which was that of Federmann, of which mention has already been made in a preceding chapter. In addition to this noted

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enterprise, two others had been undertaken by the Welsers from Coro, headed by Ambrose Alfinger and George Hohermuth. Three of these adventurous leaders, however, although they went in search of gold and other treasures, did not, as is so often stated, take any part in the quest of El Dorado, for the simple reason that they had never heard of this mythical personage. A rumor regarding it first reached Von Hutten after he had left Coro on his way southward. It came to his ears through his campmaster, Pedro de Limpias, who had served with intelligence, valor, and distinction in the expeditions of Alfinger and Federmann, and who was, therefore, well acquainted with the regions which Von Hutten purposed visiting. To render the enterprise more attractive and romantic, "De Limpias began," as Oviedo y Baños informs us, "to designate the provinces which they were starting out

to conquer by the high-standing name of El Dorado, an appellation which the soldiers of Belalcazar invented in Quito in 1536, because of the fantastic account which an Indian gave them of a powerful kingdom toward the east in the llanos, or because of a device of the devil, which is the more likely view, for the report being spread throughout America was the cause of all the deaths and misfortunes which the Spanish nation had to mourn in consequence of the numbers who, carried away by the fame of these mythical provinces, made an effort to discover its alleged riches." [2]

Von Hutten had one hundred and thirty men under his command when he left Coro in June, 1541. He went by sea to Burburata, thence to Valencia and Barquisi-

[2] "Historia de la Conquista y Poblacion de la Provincia de Venezuela," Tom. I, pp. 150-151, Madrid (1885). Cf. also "L'Occupation Allemande du Vénésuéla au XVIe Siècle," par Jules Humbert, Paris (1905).

meto, whence he started for the llanos, following closely in the footsteps of Federmann until he reached a pueblo called by this gallant commander La Fragua and by Hohermuth Nuestra Señora, but which was subsequently known as San Juan de los Llanos. Arrived at this place he learned from the Indians that Fernan Perez de Quesada had but a few days previously passed through it with a large force of foot and horse.

After serious deliberation, Von Hutten concluded to follow closely in the rear of Quesada in the hope of sharing with him the treasures of El Dorado, should he succeed in discovering the whereabouts of the Gilded Man. The march of both expeditions was through trackless plains and woodlands, across impetuous rivers and deep quagmires, in tropic heat and torrential rains that were more than enough to depress the stoutest hearts. But these intrepid soldiers

of fortune pressed onward, fully convinced that they would eventually find the object of their quest. After untold trials and dangers Quesada at length reached the Province of Papamene, at the headwaters of the Caqueta or Japurá and thence made his way to Popayan, whence he was glad to return to Bogotá a wiser but a poorer man.

Von Hutten, after following Quesada to Timana, near the crest of the eastern Cordillera, to the southeast of Popayan, faced about and directed his course toward the river Guaviare, on the banks of which his Indian guide had assured him was a great city called Macatoa, the capital of a region rich in gold and silver. As an evidence of the truth of his story he showed the German leader samples of gold fashioned in the form of apples or *nisperos,* which, he said, had been brought from that city. But before he could reach his eagerly coveted goal the winter season came on, and the entire region

was inundated. There was then nothing for the Spaniards to do but seek higher ground and await the return of the dry season. But as the district in which they had taken refuge was sparsely populated and almost entirely destitute of the means of subsistence the valiant explorers soon began to experience all the horrors of famine. For a while their chief sustenance was a mixture of maize and ants. The ants were secured by placing some maize near the opening of an ant hill, and when it was covered with these insects they consumed maize and insects together and thus allayed their hunger. But, as there was not enough of this aliment for all, many were fain to appease the gnawings of hunger by consuming grubs, beetles, or other things equally disgusting. In consequence of this their hair, beards and eyebrows fell off. "Finally," writes Oviedo y Baños, "all were covered with pestiferous tumors and poisonous ulcers, and that afflicted troop was

From Oviedo's "Historia Natural y General de las Indias"

PRIMITIVE MEANS OF NAVIGATION IN THE TIME OF THOSE WHO WENT IN QUEST OF EL DORADO

converted into a theater of miseries and an hospital of misfortunes."[3] When the inundation had subsided sufficiently to permit them to travel they resumed their march, and, after long wandering about in the wilderness, they found themselves again at Nuestra Señora, whence they had departed a twelvemonth before.

Their failure and hardships did not, however, cause them to abandon their enterprise. Far from it. Their ardor was as quenchless and their determination to achieve success was as strong as when they had taken their departure from Coro. The reported existence toward the south of a country abounding in gold and silver supplied them with a new clew and gave new zest to the expedition. After a long and perilous march, during which they passed through the country of the Uapes and visited their capital, Macatoa, the brave and persevering

[3] Op. cit., Tom. I, p. 157.

expeditioners reached the land of the rich and powerful Omaguas who inhabited the territory between the Guaviare and the Caqueta, that land which Wallace, as late as 1853, called "the unknown regions between the Rio Guaviare on one side and the Japura on the other."

Here, from an elevated position, the adventurers descried what they fondly believed was the goal which they had so long been striving to reach. It was a city so large, so they afterwards reported, that, though it was near at hand, it extended beyond the range of vision. The streets were straight with the houses close together, and in the midst of all was an imposing edifice, which their Indian guide informed them was the palace of Quarica, the lord of the Omaguas. The structure also served as a temple in which, Von Hutten's guide stated, were idols of massive gold. Some of them, he averred, were as large as children three and

four years old, while one of them was of the size of a full-grown woman. Besides these objects there were also there incalculable treasures belonging to the cacique and his vassals. And beyond this great city, the Spaniards were assured, were other larger and richer cities belonging to powerful chieftains, who governed countless subjects and whose treasures of gold were far greater than those of the lord of the imposing city on which their eyes were then riveted.

With such vast riches within their grasp the adventurers were beside themselves with joy. And although they counted but forty men, all told, they did not hesitate to attack a city in which, as they had been apprised, was a large and well-trained army. Putting spurs to his horse, Von Hutten dashed forward, followed by his men, who all confidently expected to be in a few hours the possessors of princely fortunes. But a well-directed javelin from the hand of an Oma-

guan Indian, which seriously wounded the daring leader, suddenly arrested the impetuous onset and compelled the attacking party to beat a hasty retreat. But fifteen thousand Omaguan warriors were soon in hot pursuit and shortly after engaged the invaders in battle. The Indians, however, notwithstanding their vastly superior numbers, were defeated with great loss, while the followers of Von Hutten, under the command of Pedro de Limpias, did not have a single casualty. The victors then returned to Nuestra Señora, where six months before they had left their infirm and incapacitated companions. A council of war was now convened, in which it was decided not to prosecute the enterprise so auspiciously begun without more men. These had to be obtained from Coro. But Von Hutten did not live to realize his fond hopes, for he was soon afterwards cruelly murdered through the treachery of Pedro de Limpias, when

AMAZONS PRACTICING ARCHERY ON THEIR PRISONERS AND PREPARING TO ROAST THEIR VICTIMS

Raleigh says of them: "If in the wars they tooke any prisoners * * * in the end for certaine they put them to death, for they are said to be very cruel and bloodthirsty." They were first heard of in South America when Orellana made his celebrated voyage down the Amazon.

those who had taken part in the expedition disbanded without making any further attempt to gain possession of the rich kingdom which they had discovered and which they had already considered as theirs by right of virtual conquest.

Did Von Hutten really discover El Dorado? He certainly thought so, as did likewise his doughty followers. Fully crediting what his Indian guides had told him regarding the vast treasures of gold kept in the temple of the Omaguas, he concluded at once that the cacique of his tribe was no other than the long sought Gilded King, although he had no ocular evidence of the fact or any tangible proof of the existence of the great stores of gold and silver of which he had heard such glowing reports. As to the city of the Omaguas, which, we are told, was so large that it extended beyond the range of vision, it was manifestly the creation of an excited fancy and as much

of an exaggeration as the battle of forty Europeans against fifteen thousand Indians. It could, at best, have been nothing more than an agglomeration of villages, and the palace and temple, far from being the imposing edifice described, was but a large thatched structure similar to those still seen in the region bordering the Equator.[4]

Be this, however, as it may, the fact remains that Von Hutten's expedition created an extraordinary sensation both in the New and in the Old World. Other adventurers had but heard of El Dorado, but the German commander and his men had actually located him and had gazed on his palace, which was an immense storehouse of silver

[4] For the most complete and authentic account of the expedition of Philip Von Hutten the reader is referred to the "Noticias Historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales," by Fray Pedro Simon, Quinta Noticia, Capitulos I to XI, inclusive, Cuenca (1626), or the 1882 edition of Bogotá.

and gold. Naturally they were elated, for they had succeeded in achieving what others had failed to accomplish. The Gilded Man was no longer a mere chimera but a being with a "local habitation and a name." He was the ruler of a densely populated region between the Guaviare and the Amazon and his people were known as Omaguas. Thenceforward the name El Dorado was coupled with that of the Omaguas and both names were regarded as synonymous with inexhaustible wealth.

CHAPTER V

EXPEDITIONS OF PEDRO DE URSUA, MARTIN DE PROVEDA, AND PEDRO DE SILVA

A NEW impetus was now given to the quest of El Dorado and all eyes were turned to the land of the Omaguas. Hitherto all expeditions in search of the ever-vanishing phantom had started from points north of Peru, but, in 1559, the viceroy of Peru, the Marquis of Cañete, commissioned a young knight of Navarre, Pedro de Ursua, to lead an expedition to the land of the Omaguas in search of the Gilded King. Truth to tell, the real object of the viceroy in inaugurating this enterprise was to get rid of the large number of wild adventurers who had been attracted to Peru by the civil wars. Ursua soon found himself at the head of

some hundreds of these lawless characters and, assuming the title of "Governor of Omagua and El Dorado," he, in 1560, embarked near Lamas on a hastily and rudely constructed craft and started down the River Huallaga. He soon reached the Amazon, and, sailing down this great river, he eventually reached the province of Machiparo who, according to Padre Carvajal, the chronicler of Orellana's expedition, was a great lord who ruled over many peoples and who was the friend and ally of another powerful neighboring chief called Omagua. Owing to the hostility of Machiparo and his people, Orellana was not able to explore the interior of the country, but he learned that the chief of the region possessed great treasures of gold and silver. Ursua found, as had Von Hutten and Orellana before him, the lands of Machiparo and Omagua so densely populated that, for a distance of eighty leagues, the settlements were so

close together that they were not separated from one another by more than a crossbow shot—*no habia de poblado á poblado un tiro de ballesta*—and that there was one compact city five leagues in length.[1]

Before Ursua, however, had time to explore this region, where he expected to win fame and fortune, his career was cut short in the most tragic manner. Three months and six days after faring forth on the Huallaga, and when he was within easy access of the rich lands of which Orellana had heard, but was unable to visit, the lands which Von Hutten had seen but had not gained possession of, he was, on New Year's day, cruelly murdered by some of his own men near the confluence of the Amazon and the Putumayo. But such a termination of this en-

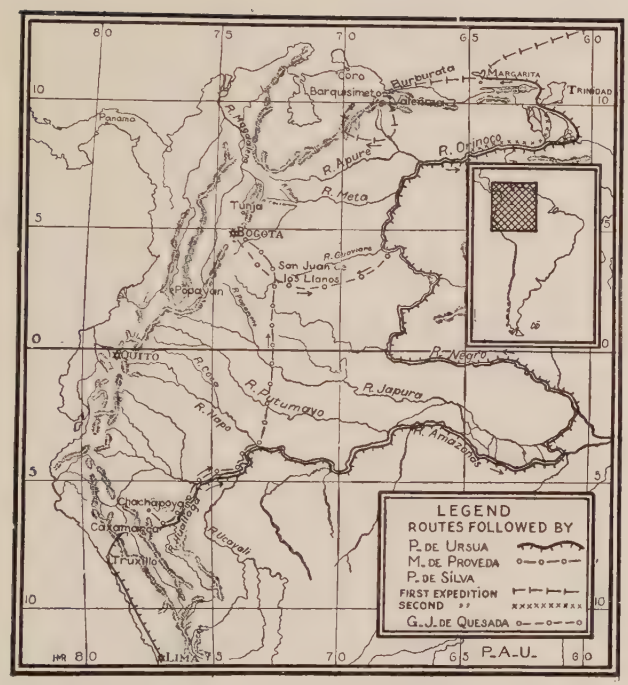
[1] "Descubrimiento del Rio de las Amazonas segun la Relacion hasta ahora inedita de Fr. Gaspar Carvajal," p. 40, por José Toribio Medina, Sevilla (1894).

terprise might have been foreseen, and indeed had been foreseen by some of Ursua's friends, who tried, but in vain, to put him on his guard against certain of the treacherous and dangerous characters who had joined the expedition. For among them, according to the Bachiller Francisco Vasquez, who accompanied Ursua, and who wrote an account of the undertaking, were the offscourings of Peru, men who had been mutineers and traitors in the service of the Spanish monarch, and who had joined the expedition in order to elude the officers of justice and to escape the punishment due to their crimes.[2] Such being the case, success was impossible, and the enterprise was doomed from the beginning.

After Ursua's tragic fate, the command

[2] "Relacion de Todo lo que sucedió en la Jornada de Omagua y Dorado hecha por el Gobernador Pedro de Orsua," p. 31, Madrid (1881), and "Jornada del Rio Marañon," Cap. III, by Toribio de Ortiguera, in "Historiadores de Indias," Tom. II, Madrid (1909).

of the expedition was usurped by the notorious Lope de Aguirre, "The Traitor." All thought of discovering El Dorado was now abandoned. The tyrant even issued an order that no one should thenceforth speak of the Omaguas under penalty of death. For now the avowed purpose of Aguirre and his Marañones, as he called his fellow conspirators, was nothing less than to reach the North Sea, the name then given to the Atlantic, and return by way of Panama to Peru, with the design of starting an insurrection there, and wresting the government from the King of Spain, to whom, in his madness, he had foresworn allegiance. The only interest the expedition has for us after the assassination of Ursua attaches to the route by which the Marañones succeeded in crossing the continent and reaching the Atlantic. Extraordinary as it may seem, this route was by the Casiquiare, that wonderful waterway which connects the Ama-



ROUTES FOLLOWED IN THE QUEST OF EL DORADO

zon with the Orinoco. For this achievement the piratical cruise of the "mad demon, Aguirre," will always remain memorable in the annals of geographical discovery.[3]

After the frightful hardships, losses of life, and tragic terminations of the expeditions of Von Hutten and Pedro de Ursua, one would have thought that further enterprises of the kind would evoke but little enthusiasm. But such was not the case. The ardor of the restless, daring adventurers of the time was as undamped as ever, and only two years after Aguirre's death, at the hand of his own Marañones, Martin de Proveda led an expedition in quest of El Dorado from Chachapoyas, Peru. He followed, apparently, the same route as that taken by Ursua until he attained the mouth

[3] For further information respecting this marvelous passage of the Casiquiare the reader is referred to the chapter on "The Romance of the Amazon" in the author's "Along the Andes and Down the Amazon."

of the Napo. From this point he directed his course toward the north and pushed forward through the dense woodlands and broad savannas, which are watered by the Putumayo, the Caqueta, and the Guaviare. He must, therefore, have followed, at least during a part of his journey, in the footsteps of Von Hutten, and must have come in contact with the Omaguas and Uapes, but with no result except a vague rumor of the existence of rich provinces somewhere in the unexplored wilderness. After having lost most of his men, he finally arrived at San Juan de los Llanos, which had marked stages in the German expeditions of Hohermuth, Federmann, and Von Hutten. From this place he proceeded in a northerly direction, eventually crossing the eastern range of the Cordilleras, and arriving at Santa Fé de Bogotá. Here the account of his adventures excited the greatest interest, for he was the first European, since the ill-fated

expedition of Gonzalo Pizarro, to journey from the basin of the Amazon to the table-lands of the Andes.

Among those who accompanied Proveda from Chachapoyas was a Spaniard from Estremadura named Pedro de Silva. In spite of the fruitless enterprise in which he had just taken part he was so convinced of the existence of the Gilded King that, a few years after his arrival at Bogotá, he resolved to go to Spain and organize there an expedition for the discovery of the phantom which had deluded so many previous adventurers. He succeeded without difficulty in securing from the Spanish monarch the concession of a certain region called the "Land of the Omaguas," which was thenceforth to be known as New Estremadura, of which he was named *adelantado.* But stranger still was the ease with which he was able to obtain the necessary men and money for his undertaking. For no

sooner was the object of his enterprise made known than crowds flocked to him from all quarters. And so great was the mad rush for the land of El Dorado that Spain, as Padre Simon tells us, could have been depopulated. Men sold all their property and willingly lent the proceeds to Silva, who promised to return all loans with a large premium as soon as they arrived in New Estremadura. Some gave him ten ducats, others a thousand, and all expected returns that would be many times greater than the amounts advanced. Some even sold their clothing and jewels in order to contribute toward the equipment of the expedition, which was the first to be organized in Spain for the discovery of the land of the Gilded King. When the time came for embarking, Silva saw six hundred men—nobles and plebeians—ready to accompany him. More than one hundred of these were married and were prepared to depart with their families.

The 19th of March, 1569, the expedition set sail from San Lucar, and in due course arrived at the island of Margarita. Here, owing to a disagreement, more than one hundred and fifty members of the expedition declined to go farther. Shortly afterwards those who were left disembarked at Burburata on the northern coast of Venezuela, whence they proceeded to Valencia. The majority of them here deserted their leader, especially those who had their families with them. Of the large number who were with the governor on his departure from Spain only one hundred and forty soldiers were now left, and with this small force he made haste, before it should be further diminished, to prosecute his enterprise. Leaving Valencia for the south he soon found himself in the boundless llanos of Venezuela, where they had to endure indescribable hardships through lack of food and the intense heat of the sunbaked region

which they traversed. At times their course lay through immense swamps covered with coarse sedges—like razor-grass—that cut the clothing from their backs; at others over a parched desert—a fierce, gleaming, angry waste—where there was neither food nor water. Seeing nothing before them but starvation and death, most of Silva's remaining troops deserted him. The richly equipped expedition that had started out with such high hopes eventually dwindled down to thirty persons, many of whom were sick or worn out by fatigue and suffering. Finally, after fruitless wandering for six months about in the desolate and sparsely inhabited plains, the exhausted survivors of this disastrous enterprise succeeded in making their way to Barquisimeto, where they disbanded. From this place Silva departed for Bogotá, whence he returned to his distant home in Chachapoyas.

One would naturally suppose that Silva's

experience would have sufficed to deter him from taking part in any further enterprises in search of the phantom which had previously been the cause of such frightful disasters. Far from it. He had scarcely reached home when he again set out for Spain to organize a second expedition for the search of El Dorado. And, incredible as it may seem, he was soon at the head of one hundred and seventy men, who were willing to risk their fortunes and lives in the quest of that *ignis fatuus* which had already led so many to destruction. Entering the Dragon's Mouth, between the island of Trinidad and Tierra Firme, he proceeded to a place about ninety leagues up the Orinoco. Here, what with fighting with the Caribs, and the inclemency of the climate, the plague of mosquitoes and other insects, many of his followers soon perished. The others, weakened by famine and disease and unable to offer any resistance to the hostile

natives, eventually fell victims to their relentless enemies. Only one Spaniard—Juan Martin de Albujar—escaped with his life, and then only after a long captivity in the wilds of Guiana.

CHAPTER VI

EXPEDITION OF GONSALO XIMENES DE QUESADA

The last two expeditions, that had cost so many lives and so much treasure, were not the only ones which were organized at this time to discover the coveted land of El Dorado. While Pedro de Silva was preparing in Spain for his first expedition, a similar enterprise was being organized in New Granada, and by no less a personage than the conqueror of that country, Gonsalo Ximenes de Quesada. For no sooner had word been received in Bogotá of Silva's intentions and of his appointment as governor of Nueva Estremadura than there was among all classes the most intense excitement. The region of which Silva had been made governor was claimed by New Gra-

nada, and its citizens felt that they were being deprived of a portion of their territory. If Venezuela today were to take possession of a part of Colombia, the excitement could not be greater than it was when the people of Bogotá first learned of Silva's appointment to the governorship of the lands to the east of the Cordilleras. And the one who felt most aggrieved was the veteran Conquistador, the Licentiate Ximenes de Quesada. As conqueror of New Granada, he claimed all the territory to the east of Bogotá for a distance of four hundred leagues between the river Pauto on the north of the Papamene on the south. This embraced the greater part of the continent north of the Amazon and included, too, as all then agreed, the famous land of El Dorado. As to the existence of such a region and of the Gilded Chieftain, who was then attracting even more attention than ever before, Quesada seems to have entertained

no doubt whatever. Such being the case, he could not brook the idea of anyone else appropriating what he regarded as the most valuable asset of his conquest. Pedro de Silva, while on his way with Martin de Proveda from Chachapoyas to Bogotá, had been told by the Indians of the existence of a region beyond their own on the Meta and the Baraguan—one of the many names of the Orinoco—which was peopled by tribes who were so rich that all the service of their houses was of silver and gold. These and many similar stories,[1] coupled with the reports of the expeditions which had been made by Diego de Ordaz and Alonzo de Herrera up the Orinoco and the Meta and by Hohermuth and Von Hutten across the llanos to the east of the Andes, all conspired to excite anew the cupidity of those who were longing for new adventures and were

[1] Padre Simon, Op. cit., Tom. I, p. 349.

but waiting for a leader in whom they had confidence.

Quesada, the hero of a hundred battles and the successful commander in one of the most extraordinary campaigns in the history of the Conquest, was their man. The fact that his brother, Fernan Perez de Quesada, had eighteen years before endured such hardships and lost all he possessed in search of the Gilded Man, and that many other enterprises, organized with the same end in view, had met with nothing but misery and disaster, far from checking his ardor, which was still as undamped as when he led his gallant band from the valley of the Magdalena to the plateau of Cundinamarca, seemed an incentive to spur him on to achieve what others had failed to accomplish.

In 1579, Castellanos tells us, Quesada took his departure from Bogotá with three hundred Spanish soldiers, fifteen hundred Indians and a large number of negroes, six

THE LICENTIATE, GONSALO XIMENES DE QUESADA, CONQUEROR OF NEW GRANADA AND ONE OF THOSE WHO WENT IN QUEST OF EL DORADO

hundred cows, eight hundred swine, eleven hundred horses, and all the equipment necessary for a long campaign. Among those who accompanied him were many of noble lineage, who, as the old chronicler informs us, were willing to leave a life of ease and luxury for one of untold hardships and to exchange the certain for the uncertain and unknown. Castellanos, who had served under Quesada in his conquest of New Granada and who was personally acquainted with many who took part in this enterprise in quest of El Dorado, in prefacing his account of the expedition deplores the cupidity and folly of those who, having a competency, do not hesitate to leave their homes and expose not only their own lives but also those of their families by embarking in perilous and bootless ventures.

"To persuade idle and unmarried men, lazy vagabonds who neither have nor desire

honest occupation, to take part in such enterprises, would be tolerable, but it is wrong to incite married men, with their wives and children, as was then the case, to follow the flair of a land abounding in riches. Thus moved by false reports, married Spanish and *mestiza* women joined this miserable expedition in which nearly all perished. I do not wish to believe that their husbands took them along to get rid of them, but rather to think that they were misled by vain promises and delusive hopes which issued in dreadful catastrophes." [2]

Crossing the eastern Cordilleras, the expeditioners proceeded to the pueblo of San Juan de los Llanos, which had previously supplied food and shelter to other adventurers in search of gold and the land of the Gilded King. Soon after leaving this place

[2] "Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada," Tom. II, p. 222, publicada por primera vez por D. Antonio Paz y Media, Madrid (1886).

CASTELLANOS.[1]

JUAN DE CASTELLANOS, AUTHOR OF ELEGIAS DE "VARONES ILUSTRES DE INDIAS," AND "HISTORIA DEL NUEVO REINO DE GRANADA"

He was a soldier under the Conquistador, Gonsalo Ximenes de Quesada, and is our chief authority for the quest of the Gilded Chieftain by the conqueror of New Granada. After many years' service in the army, he became a priest and had charge of a parish in Tunja, New Granada, where he died at an advanced age.

they were exposed to great danger in one of those terrific prairie fires which frequently sweep over the grass-covered llanos of this part of South America. Some days after this event they reached the rivers Guaviare and Guaracare. Here they began to suffer from sickness and lack of food. They still, however, continued their course toward the land of the Omaguas, of which their guide, Diego Soleto, who had taken part in Proveda's expedition through this region, had given them such glowing accounts. But they had not proceeded far before the winter began. This added greatly to their distress. The incessant rains which characterize this season soon converted the country through which they were marching into a region of impassable morasses and lagoons. This augmented the number of sick men and animals, and soon the line of march was strewn with dead Indians and horses; with saddles, clothing, jewels, trinkets—all of

which were abandoned by their owners, who were so reduced by famine and disease that they were scarcely able to move.

To remain longer in this inundated region meant certain death. They were, therefore, obliged to drag themselves to higher land, and to remain there until the waters should subside. After numerous fruitless attempts they finally found a suitable place, an Indian settlement, where they found sufficient maize and yuca to keep them from starvation. But here they were without salt, for the natives not only never used it, but had never even heard of it.[3] The absence of this food ingredient greatly aggravated their miserable condition and was the cause of various diseases. Some became almost blind, others deaf, others, still, were covered with sores filled with worms, for which they could find no remedy, while yet others were

[3] Que nunca comen sal eternamente, ni della por alli tienen noticia. Castellanos, op. cit. p. 241.

Struggling Through a Tropical Forest in the Lowlands

afflicted with an intolerable itching, which never allowed them a moment's rest, day or night. So great, indeed, was their suffering that many became mad and died terrible deaths. And all this time, even in the elevated position in which they encamped, there was a continual downpour—*agua del cielo y agua de la tierra*—so that the wretched wanderers could neither dry their clothes nor have a moment's repose.

Losing all hope and seeing themselves in face of certain death, many deserted and endeavored to make their way homeward. A few were successful, but a large number perished in the trackless wilderness either from starvation or at the hands of ferocious savages. Others mutinied and attempted the life of their leader, who they said was conducting them to inevitable destruction. But this attempt, which was foiled, was, Castellanos assures us, rather an act of despair than of malice. Taking pity on his

suffering and dejected followers, Quesada announced that all who desired to return to their homes were at liberty to do so. The majority of his men eagerly embraced this opportunity to withdraw from the depths of the dark and dismal forest, in which they had so long been wandering, to a land where they might once more have a view of the clear blue sky overhead. After this the *adelantado's* force was reduced to forty-five men. With these heroic spirits he continued his journey and eventually reached a point near the site of the present pueblo of San Fernando de Atabapo, at the confluence of the Guaviare and the Orinoco. But the day at length arrived when the intrepid leader was forced to realize that he was at the end of his resources, and that his expedition, which had departed from Bogotá with such a grand display and with such exalted hopes, was a failure. Accordingly, after three years of indescribable hardships; of forced

marches in dense, tangled jungles, through which they had to cut their way with machetes; of ceaseless conflicts with hostile savages, who burned their villages and provisions on the approach of the Spaniards; after enduring all the agonies of famine and tropical disease; after battling against the inclemency of an enervating climate and the clouds of noxious insects that tormented them day and night, without intermission, the hapless adventurers, who were now only twenty-five in number, faced about and began their long and arduous march toward Bogotá.

The net results of this undertaking, one of the best equipped that ever went in search of the phantom which had lured so many to destruction, may be told in a few words. Of the three hundred Spaniards who had embarked in the enterprise, only seventy-four escaped, and of these the greater number died of incurable diseases

contracted during their wanderings in the pestilent climate of the sultry lowlands. Of the fifteen hundred Indians, there remained only four, and of the eleven hundred horses there were but eighteen. The expense entailed in equipping the enterprise amounted to more than two hundred thousand *pesos* in gold,[4] the equivalent, in our money, of nearly $2,000,000.

But a more regrettable loss than that of money was occasioned by the death of Padre Francisco Medrano, who succumbed to an attack of fever which he contracted in the miasmatic jungles of the lowlands through which lay the line of march. This accomplished Franciscan friar had accompanied Quesada as the chronicler of the expedition, and, had it not been for his untimely death, he would, to judge by his uncompleted history of New Granada, which

[4] Padre Simon says the amount exceeded three hundred thousand gold pesos.

Coat of Mail and Spur of Gonsalo Ximenes De Quesada

Also the sword and dagger of Nicholas Federmann, the distinguished rival of the Spanish Conquistador. Relics on exhibition at the National Museum of Bogotá.

served as the basis of Padre Simon's priceless work, have given us a story of adventure of as thrilling interest as anything in literature. Unfortunately all his papers regarding Quesada's enterprise have been lost, and we must now be satisfied with the brief but graphic account of his expedition which is contained in the "Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada" of Juan de Castellanos.

And what did Quesada and his followers receive in return for such a sacrifice of treasure and human life? Absolutely nothing. They did not find the slightest trace of the Gilded Chieftain nor the faintest indication of the rich and populous country to which their guide, Diego Soleto, had promised to lead them. The region through which they passed was for the most part almost depopulated. Only here and there did the adventurers come across a few straggling huts, which were tenanted by a small number of wretched savages. The

largest settlement they found during their three years' wanderings consisted of about thirty filthy hovels, and from these they were soon driven by the downpour that inundated the country in which they were located. The expedition was for each and all a disastrous failure.

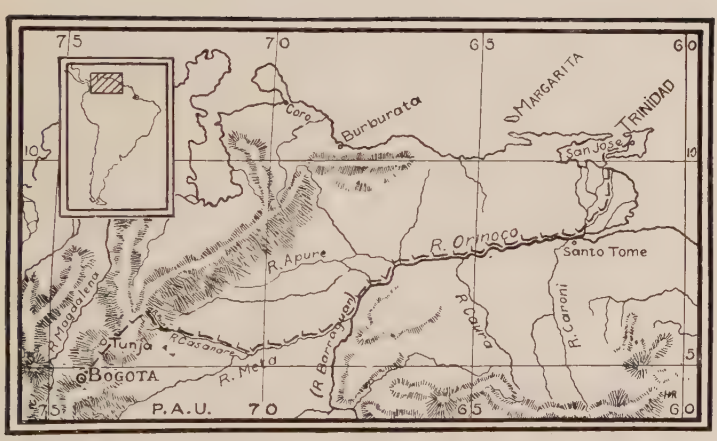
Quesada had risked his health and life and fortune on the venture. He had lost his health and fortune, but his life was spared for a short while longer. Still, marvelous to relate, in spite of his awful experiences and of those who, like him, had sacrificed everything in the frenzied attempts to discover the land of El Dorado, his belief in the existence of this mythical territory was still unshaken, and he regarded this region as the most valuable heritage he could transmit to his heirs. Before his demise, in Mariquita, near the Magdalena, where he spent the last days of his life,

he constituted Antonio de Berrio, who had married his sister's daughter, his heir and the governor of the vast region between the Pauto and the Papamene.

CHAPTER VII

EXPEDITIONS OF ANTONIO DE BERRIO, THE FRANCISCAN LAY BROTHERS AND NUFLO DE CHAVES

After the tremendous failures that had signalized the expeditions of the two Quesadas in search of the Gilded King, one would suppose that it would have been impossible to find again anyone who would be so foolish as to propose a new expedition in quest of El Dorado. This, however, was far from being the case. The multitude declared that all previous failures had been due to the fact that the expeditions already mentioned had not sought El Dorado in his proper territory, and that the quest should be continued in a region which had not yet been explored. It was now clear that the land of gold and silver was not to be found on the Andean plateaus or in the llanos skirting the eastern



Route Followed by Antonio de Berrio in Quest of El Dorado

Cordilleras. This had been proved by the German expeditions from Coro and by the explorations of Proveda, Silva, and the Quesadas. But this, it was contended, was not conclusive against the existence of the Gilded King. It merely demonstrated that it was necessary to institute a search for him elsewhere, for people were fully convinced that it was only a question of time until the searchers for El Dorado would be rewarded by the discovery of the richest land and the wealthiest monarch in the New World and by gaining the possession of that splendor in the wilds of which they had so long dreamed—the palaces and pleasure domes of that gorgeous city to which

> Did visible guardians of the earth's great heart
> Bring their choice tributes culled from many a mine——
> Diamond and jasper and porphyry and the art
> Of figured chrysolite; nor silver shine
> There wanted, nor the mightier power of gold.

Antonio de Berrio also was evidently of this opinion, for, shortly after his uncle's death, he organized an expedition for the conquest of the region between the Pauto and the Papamene, of which he had inherited the governorship. Somewhere withir these limits and the mouth of the Orinoco was, he doubted not, the land of El Dorado. But where was it? That was the question to which he was determined to find an answer. As it had not been discovered in the west or south, in spite of the numerous explorations which had been made in these directions, he concluded that it must lie toward the east. He was confirmed in this view by reports, already referred to, that had been circulated by those who had taken part in Proveda's enterprise. According to them, the Indians of the regions through which they had passed on their way to New Granada had told them of a rich people and a

land [1] abounding in silver and gold on the borders of the Meta and the Baraguan. Now the Baraguan was the old Indian name for the Orinoco between the mouth of the Guaviare and that of the Apure. To the east, therefore, he would go.

It was in 1584 that Berrio left the table-land of New Granada for the valley of Baraguan. Crossing the Andes by way of the pueblo of Chita, where he had an *encomienda,* he descended the Pauto and the Casanare, by which he entered the Meta. Continuing his voyage, he eventually entered the Baraguan, and, after voyaging down it for some distance, he disembarked and established his headquarters. From this point he began to reconnoiter the adjacent country. Shortly afterwards he learned from an Indian, whom he had treated with special consideration, of the existence, at no great distance from where they then were, of the

[1] Padre Simon, Tom. I, p. 349.

rich and auriferous lands around the great lake of Manoa. This report at once revived the drooping spirits of Berrio's men, who had begun to experience the ill effects of the countless hardships to which they had been exposed in traversing the disease-breeding valleys of the Casanare and the Baraguan. The adventurers now felt sure that they were on the right track, but after three years' futile wandering through dark forests and over desert plains, after enduring all the horrors of famine and seeing their numbers decimated by disease and the poisoned arrows of hostile savages, they were at length compelled to return to their homes in New Granada.

But, notwithstanding Berrio's dreadful experiences during this long expedition in a wild and unexplored region, it was not long before he determined to make a second attempt to achieve success. Accompanied by a resolute band of adventurers, he again

REPUTED SCENE AT MANOA OR DORADO

Capt. Keymis, one of Raleigh's companions in a later expedition, refers to the Essekebe River shown here, and also speaks of the Indians carrying boats and cargoes overland to Lake Foponowini.

crossed the sierra and, after surmounting many difficulties, he finally reached the lower Orinoco, where he founded the town of Santo Tomé de Guiana, near the confluence of the Caroni and the Orinoco. After this he proceeded to the island of Trinidad, where he laid the foundations of another town, known as San José de Oruno.

Having in these two towns bases for future operations, the governor now turned his attention anew to the quest of the Gilded King, regarding whom and the rich lands, over which he was said to bear rule, Berrio received daily the most extravagant reports. The region in question was said to be to the southeast of Santo Tomé and was called Manoa, from the name of a large lake located in its midst. It was further averred that the cacique to whom it was subject was accustomed, all bespangled with gold, to offer sacrifice in this lake, whence his province, like that of the Omaguas, began to be

called El Dorado. The home of the Gilded Chieftain was now transferred from the elevated plateau of Cundinamarca to the lowlands of southeastern Guiana; from Guatavitá to Manoa; from one end of the continent to the other. The lying statements about this mythical personage, Padre Simon declares, were put in circulation by the astute Indians, who wished to inveigle the Spaniards from the settlements they had made, or else they were the invention of the devil, who desired to lure the adventurers to certain destruction.[2]

But whatever was the origin of these reports, the Spaniards had no hesitation in accepting them as true. Their quarry, so long and eagerly sought, was at last located beyond peradventure, and it only remained for them to make themselves masters of the

[2] Todo embuste e invencion de los indios para echar los españoles de sus tierras o traza del demonio para que pereciera tanta gente española. Op. cit. Tom. I, p. 361.

golden region that was so near at hand. Berrio, especially, was more than elated, for he felt that he was soon to enter upon the glorious inheritance which had so long been the object of his ceaseless toil. In order, however, to be prepared for all emergencies, and to make sure of getting possession of the land of untold treasure, he bethought him of the necessity of increasing the force under his command. He, accordingly, commissioned his campmaster, Domingo De Vera, to go to Spain for men and money to guarantee the success of the contemplated expedition to Manoa.

He could not have made a better choice, for De Vera was not only a man of rare intelligence, but he, moreover, possessed the faculty of presenting any scheme in which he was interested in the most plausible light. If facts were not available, he did not hesitate to draw on his imagination, which always stood him in good stead when promot-

ing an enterprise like the one in which he was then engaged. According to Berrio's instructions, De Vera was to bring three hundred men and no more. But so successful was he in exciting interest in the expedition to El Dorado, which now meant a province as well as a gilded chieftain, as originally, that crowds flocked to him from all quarters begging to be allowed to share in an enterprise in which fortune and glory were certainties. To excite the cupidity and enthusiasm of the multitude, De Vera exhibited gold, jewels, and uncut emeralds which he had brought from New Granada, and assured them that the land whose conquest was in view abounded in these treasures to an incredible extent.

With these and similar alluring tales he found no difficulty in securing volunteers for the enterprise, which was to bring inestimable wealth to all who should have the good fortune to have part in it. Wherever he and

INDIANS NEAR MANOA SMELTING GOLD AND CASTING IT INTO INGOTS, ACCORDING TO REPORTS BROUGHT TO THOSE IN QUEST OF EL DORADO

his agents went they were besieged by applicants from all classes of society, who were eager to go without delay to the marvelous region of Manoa. Gentle and simple, members of the court and the royal council of the Indies, farmers and tradesmen, veterans who had fought in the wars of Italy and Flanders, gathered about De Vera and his representatives and offered them large sums of money for the privilege of being allowed to embark in the seductive enterprise. Men who had comfortable homes sold them, together with all their possessions, deeming them as dross in comparison with what they were sure to find in Manoa.

Spain became El Dorado-mad, and the craze started by De Vera assumed such proportions that an old chronicler avers that it would then have been possible entirely to depopulate La Mancha and Estremadura and the kingdoms of Toledo and Castile. And as for money for equipping the expe-

dition, it poured in from all directions. The Spanish court alone contributed seventy thousand ducats, more, Padre Simon declares, than the sum expended by the Crown of Castile for the discovery of the New World.[3]

When De Vera sailed from San Lucar in February, 1595, he was the commander of an imposing fleet with more than two thousand souls aboard,[4] more than twenty

[3] J. B. Thatcher, in his "Christopher Columbus, His Life, His Work, His Remains," Vol. I, p. 490, estimates the cost of the first expedition of Columbus at $4,560 of our money, if calculated on a silver basis, and at $7,203 if computed on a gold basis. But the purchasing power of these sums four centuries ago was eight to ten times as great as they are today. Estimating on the same basis, the amount contributed to De Vera's expedition by the Castilian court, we find that it was about seventeen times as great as that which was received by Columbus for his epoch-making discovery of the New World.

[4] Y eran muchas mas cuando desembarcaron, porque, como iban muchas mujeres parieron muchas en los navios. Padre Simon, ut sup., p. 363.

times as many as Columbus had with him when he set sail in the "sea of darkness" on that memorable voyage which gave to Castile and Leon a new world. Many of these were women and children, for the fathers of families had been so fascinated by the stories they had heard about the province of El Dorado that they thought they were going to a sort of terrestrial paradise.

But how soon they were disenchanted! Scarcely had they set foot on the island of Trinidad when their hardships and sufferings began. The city of San José proved to be but a small village, composed of a few huts, and barely adequate to shelter its few inhabitants. The newcomers were, therefore, until temporary sheds could be erected, exposed to the drenching rains and the prostrating heat of the tropics. And, to add to their distress, it was not long before they began to experience the effects of famine, for the only provisions available were those

they had brought with them from Spain, and, to make matters worse, a great part of those, in consequence of the humid, steaming climate, soon became unfit for use.

Great, however, as were the miseries of those who remained in Trinidad, they were incomparably less than the calamities of those who went to Santo Tomé, where Governor Berrio was awaiting their arrival before completing arrangements for the expedition to Manoa. The so-called city of Santo Tomé, like San José, was but a small town of hastily constructed sheds and cabins, barely sufficient to shield their inmates from the inclemency of a tropical climate. But to reach this place, forty leagues up the Orinoco, was a terrific undertaking. Instead of going thither in the vessels that had brought them from the mother country, as they might easily have done, they ventured forth in small canoes. This involved a long and painful struggle of thirty days against

From De Bry

SPANISH SOLDIERS SENT TO RECONNOITER AT MANOA PUT TO DEATH BY THE INDIANS

the billows of the Gulf of Paria and the impetuous current of the Orinoco. Many of the adventurers were drowned in the Orinoco or met most frightful deaths at the hands of the Caribs, who were lying in wait for them. Those who eventually arrived at their destination were sent with as little delay as possible toward the south to take possession of the land of El Dorado, which they now regarded as within their grasp. But they had not proceeded far on their journey when they ran short of provisions. Even the cassava and fruits, which they were at first able to secure from the Indians, now failed them. The wily savages had drawn the fortune-seekers into the wilderness, knowing well that famine and disease would soon do their work without resort to arms. In a short time the Indians saw the invaders so prostrated by hunger and malignant fevers that they gathered their concealed forces and almost exterminated them. Of

the three hundred who had but a short time before left Santo Tomé, with the assurance of soon reaching the great capital of the Gilded King, only thirty returned, and of these one-half were soon in their graves in consequence of the incurable diseases which they had contracted during their short but calamitous campaign.

The ranks of those who remained in Santo Tomé were likewise rapidly decimated, for it was not long until a plague—apparently yellow fever—broke out and made the most frightful ravages among the inhabitants who were already almost exhausted by sickness and famine.

With neither food nor medicine, it was impossible to offer any resistance to the dread visitant. Those who had remained in Trinidad also saw their ranks rapidly thinned by disease and lack of means of subsistence. But they had, writes an old chronicler, one grim advantage over their hapless

brethren in Santo Tomé. They had two forges, which they had brought with them for the purpose of repairing their arms and tools. These they used for heating irons with which to cauterize the wounds of those who had been infected by poisonous insects and to burn off the toes of those who were suffering from the gangrenous sores caused by the ubiquitous pest of the tropics—the flesh-penetrating chigoe.

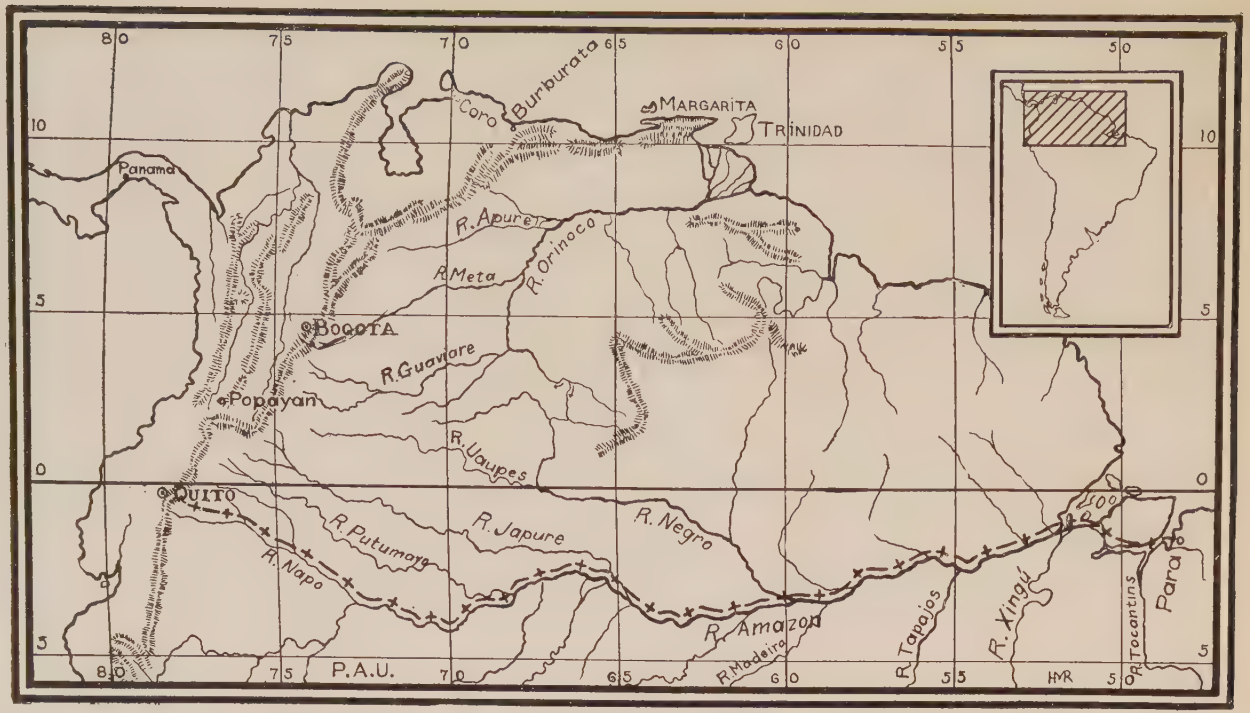
Berrio's quest of El Dorado, like all preceding ones, ended in disaster. Shortly after the fatal termination of the expedition to Manoa he died in Santo Tomé, while his lieutenant, De Vera, soon followed him to the grave, dying at San José, in Trinidad, as was said of him, "with greater sufferings than patience."

Thus ended Berrio's pompously heralded expedition to El Dorado. "It was," writes Padre Simon, "like the statue of Nabuchodonosor, beginning with a head of gold and

ending with feet of clay, and a lamentable downfall. God grant that it may serve as a warning and as a disillusionment for those who may be tempted to take part in such enterprises in the future." [5]

The old friar's desire was realized so far as concerned any great expeditions of the kind that were thenceforth organized by Spaniards or conducted under Spanish auspices. But expeditions on a smaller scale were of frequent occurrence for a long time afterwards. Reference must be made to one of these, because it was as remarkable for the simplicity of its equipment as for the small number of those who took part in it. It is known in the annals of South American discovery as *El Viaje de los Legos Franciscanos*—The Voyage of the Franciscan Lay Brothers—and was made in 1637. Accompanied by only six Spanish soldiers and two Indians, these intrepid men, Fray Domingo

[5] Ut sup., p. 372.



ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE FRANCISCAN LAY BROTHERS IN QUEST OF EL DORADO

de Brieva and Fray Andres de Toledo, started from the eastern slope of the Andes in search of El Dorado and the Temple of the Sun. And with no preparation whatever, and having nothing more than the clothes on their backs and a small dugout, they made their way down the Napo and the Amazon, subsisting on such provisions as they could find on their way or obtain from the Indians. And during this long voyage, which a century before Orellana had been able to make only after incredible difficulties and hardships, they never encountered any danger from the Indians nor did they suffer from lack of means of subsistence. At the end of three months they arrived at Pará, near the mouth of the Amazon, and were able and ready, not long afterwards, to conduct the Portuguese captain, Pedro Texeira, on his famous expedition from Pará to Quito. The friars, like all previous adventurers, failed to discover any

trace of El Dorado, but, unlike their predecessors, they were able to accomplish their marvelous enterprise without loss of life and were able to declare on their return that during their entire journey they were as free from danger as if they had been at home in their own convents.[6]

Mention should also be made of an early expedition organized in 1560 in Asuncion, on the Rio de la Plata, by Capt. Nuflo de Chaves. It is worthy of notice as indicating how widely circulated at an early date were the reports regarding El Dorado and how vague and conflicting they were concerning

[6] Hicieron su viaje durmiendo todas las noches en tierra tan seguros como si estuvieran en sus conventos sin sucederles cosa adversa, sino todas prosperas, todas felices. Fray Diego de Cordoba y Salinas, "Cronica de la Religiosisima provincia de los doce Apostles del Peru," Cap. 32-34, Lima (1651). For an account of this remarkable expedition, see "Nuevo Descubrimiento del Rio del Marañon Llamado de las Amazonas," by F. Laureano de la Cruz (1653), first published at Madrid in 1900.

the location of the region where this fabulous chieftain was supposed to have his home. After a vain pursuit of the Gilded King in the territories watered by the Pilcomayo and the Paraguay the gallant captain, who had previously won distinction by his numerous achievements in this part of South America, finally arrived at the upper reaches of the Mamoré, in the present Republic of Bolivia, where the expedition disbanded without accomplishing any more than had similar undertakings in the northern part of the continent.[7]

[7] "Descripcion de las Indias Occidentales" de Antonio Herrera, Cap. XXI, Madrid (1730).

CHAPTER VIII

EXPEDITION OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH

By one of those striking coincidences that mark the progress of maritime discovery, as well as that of scientific invention, the very month which saw De Vera's fleet set sail from San Lucar also witnessed Sir Walter Raleigh's famous expedition starting from Plymouth and having in view the same object as the adventurers from Spain. In some respects this English enterprise was one of the most extraordinary episodes in the annals of American exploration and discovery, as in its final results it was one of the most tragic. It is sometimes asserted that only the Spaniards could have had part in such Quixotic undertakings as the pursuit of the Gilded Man, but here we have one whom

Sir Walter Raleigh

Englishmen are wont to laud as "The great Raleigh," as "The first apostle and martyr of the British Colonial Empire," as "The founder of the greater England across the seas," and as one who was as distinguished for shrewdness in affairs as he was eminent in clear-sighted political wisdom.

Be this as it may, neither he nor others of his countrymen, likewise remarkable for business acumen, were proof against the glittering mirage of El Dorado, which had already lured so many thousands to premature deaths. With Raleigh, doubtless, one of the motives that impelled him to undertake the hazardous and exhausting expedition to Guiana was to regain the favor of Queen Elizabeth, which had recently been forfeited. Then, too, there was the lure of adventure and excitement, the love of swift, brilliant action, and the intolerance of the common, which were such marked characteristics of this remarkable man.

While in retirement in his Dorsetshire home, after his enforced withdrawal from court, Raleigh devoted much time to the travel lore of Spain and read with avidity all the works he could procure on the achievements of the Conquistadores and the expeditions of those who had gone in quest of the Gilded King and the fabled land of gold and treasure inestimable. Others of his countrymen had dreamed of a westward passage to the Indies, by means of which could be tapped the trade of the teeming East; of sudden riches to be had in the land of spices and in the golden Chersonese, but the vast golden empire of Manoa appealed in a special manner to one like Raleigh, who was always hankering after new adventures, and it seemed to haunt his imagination in the most imperious manner. Ever dominated by a nervous desire to attain wealth and honor and power, he felt himself beckoned toward the region watered by the great

Orinoco. Once there he would not be far from the object of his heart's desire, for he could already in his dreams see himself the possessor of wealth untold and assured of undying fame as the one "who had endowed his country with the mighty El Dorado." He was well aware of the tragic issues of previous Spanish and German expeditioners, but, notwithstanding all this, he considered the venture, to use his own words, "feasible and certain." The long catalogue of catastrophes which signalized the undertakings of his predecessors and the failures that invariably attended all their efforts, far from abating his enthusiasm or weakening his resolution, but kindled the fire of enterprise and spurred him to achieve what others had essayed but failed to accomplish.

Strange as it may appear, Raleigh experienced but little difficulty in interesting his prosaic and conservative countrymen in the scheme in which he himself was prepared to

venture fortune and life. The hope of rapid gain aroused their cupidity at once. Abounding gold and virgin lands of vast extent were to them, as well as to the poetical and romantic sons of Spain, potent talismans for retrieving lost fortunes and securing the luxuries and pomps of life. Among those who gave liberal furtherance to Raleigh's enterprise were some of the most prominent men of the realm and most influential members of the court. The glamour of the marvelous, coupled with the glowing descriptions of the great empire of Guiana with its inexhaustible riches, sufficed, in Raleigh's, as in De Vera's case, to secure all the money necessary for the equipment of the expedition that was to redound to the eternal glory of the leader and of all his associates. One of the contributors to the enterprise was the illustrious statesman, Sir Robert Cecil, while one of the ships in Raleigh's squadron of

five vessels belonged to the Lord High Admiral of England.

Raleigh's fleet set sail from Plymouth February 9, 1595, and arrived at Trinidad, opposite the mouth of the Orinoco, before the end of the following month. During the voyage westward, near the Canaries, he increased his stores by appropriating those belonging to two foreign vessels—a Spaniard laden with firearms and a Fleming freighted with wines—a little privateering work which was permitted by the commission of Queen Elizabeth, who was nothing loath to connive at warfare against her enemies so long as it was known to be against her public command.[1]

[1] The terms of his commission from the Queen expressly empowered him "to do Us service in offending the King of Spain and his subjects in his dominions to your uttermost power"; all who sailed under him, or should afterwards consort with his fleet, are bound to give due obedience in whatever "you shall think meet to direct or undertake for the prejudice of the said King of Spain, or any of Our

Arrived at Trinidad, Sir Walter set about getting information regarding the land of El Dorado and the easiest means of making the voyage up the Orinoco. The previous year he had dispatched Capt. Whiddon to explore this river and its tributaries, but his emissary being thwarted in his designs by Antonio de Berrio, who was then governor of Trinidad as well as of the Orinoco region, was obliged to return to England without the information he had gone to seek, and which was so essential to the success of his chief's expedition. I give Raleigh's method of procedure in obtaining the knowledge he desired in his own words:

enemies"; and whatever shall be done under that commission, "as well by sea as by land, for the furtherance of this, Our service and enfeebling of Our enemies, the subjects and adherents of the King of Spain, you and all such as serve under you in this voyage shall be clearly acquitted and discharged."—"The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh," Vol. I, p. 195, by Edward Edwards, London, 1868.

Route Followed by Sir Walter Raleigh in Search of El Dorado

"While we remained at Puerto de los Hispanioles some Spaniards came abord us to buy lynnen of the company and such things as they wanted, and also to view our shippes and company, all of which I entertained kindly and feasted after our manner; by means whereof I learned of one and another as much of the estate of Guiana as I could, or as they knew, for these poore souldiers having been many yeares without wine, a few draughts made them merry, in which moode they vaunted of Guiana and of the riches thereof, and all what they knew of the waies and passages, my selfe seeming to purpose nothing lesse than the enterance or discouerie thereof, but bred in them an opinion that I was bound onely for the reliefe of those English which I had planted in Virginia, whereof the brute was come among them." [2]

[2] "The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a Relation of the Great and

After securing all the information possible from the "poore souldiers," who had been made "merry" by the wine which he had captured at the Canaries on his way west, Raleigh next proceeded to protect his rear from the attacks of the Spaniards who, he had reason to apprehend, would make every effort possible to frustrate his project.

"So, considering that to enter Guiana by small boats, to depart 400 to 500 miles from my ships, and leave a garrison in my backe interested in the same enterprize, who also daily expected supplies out of Spaine, I should have sauoured very much of the Asse; and therefore taking a time of most aduantage, I set upon the Corp du guard in the euening, and hauing put them to the swored, toke their new city which they call S. Joseph

Golden City of Manoa, which the Spaniards call El Dorado," etc., performed in the year 1595 by Sir Walter Raleigh, Knt. Pub. by the Hakluyt Society, London (1848).

From De Bry

THE BURNING OF ST. JOSEPH BY SIR WALTER RALEIGH

by breake of day; they abode not any fight after a few shot, and all being dismissed but onely Berreo and his companion, I brought them with me abord, and at the instance of the Indians I set their new city of S. Joseph on fire." [3]

Having complied with the wishes of his Queen, by thus "offending the King of Spain and his subjects," and completed all arrangements for the conquest of Guiana, Raleigh hastened toward his "purposed discovery." But before proceeding up the Orinoco he determined to make friends of the Indians of Trinidad. Calling together their chiefs, "I made them understand," he informs us, "that I was seruant of a Queene, who was the great Cacique of the north, and a virgin, and had more Caciqui under her than there were trees in their island; that she was an enemy to the Castellani in respect of

[3] Ut sup., p. 8.

their tyrannie and oppression and that she delivered all such nations about her, as were by them oppressed, and hauing freed all the coast of the northern world from seruitude had sent me to free them also, and withal to defend the country of Guiana from their invasion and conquest. I shewed them her maiesties picture, which they so admired and honored, as it had beene easie to haue brought them idolatrous thereof." [4]

The way, so the doughty-handed adventurer thought, was now clear. His base was safe, the Indians were his friends and allies, and Berrio was his prisoner. There was still, it is true, one great difficulty in the way, and that was regarding the exact location of Manoa Concerning this Raleigh declares:

"My intelligence was farre from the trueth, for the country is situate about 600

[4] Ut sup., p. 8.

From Gottfriedt

RALEIGH GOING UP THE ORINOCO

During his voyage up the river Raleigh saw, he declares, "Divers sorts of strange fishes of marvelous bigness," and thousands of "those uglie serpents called Lagartos—alligators. I had a negro, a very proper young fellow, that, leaping out the galley to swim in the mouth of the river, was, in all our sights, taken and devoured by one of those Lagartos."

English miles farther from the sea than I was made beleeue it had beene, which afterward understanding to be true by Berreo, I kept from the knowledge of my companie, who else would neuer have been brought to attempt the same."

From lack of information regarding the Orinoco he left his ships at anchor off Trinidad and started up the river in barges, ship's boats, wherries, and a "Gallego bote fitted with banks to row on," in which he placed one hundred men and provisions for a month. His troubles now began. For, owing to their restricted quarters, "we were," he says:

"al driven to lie in the raine and wether, in the open aire, in the burning sunne, and upon hard bords and to dresse our meat, and to carry al manner of furniture in them wherewith they were so pestered and unsauery that, what with victuals being most

fish, with the weete clothes of so many men thrust together and the heate of the sunne, I will undertake there was neuer any prison in England that coulde be founde more unsauery and lothsome, especially to my self, who had for many yeares before beene dieted and cared for in a sort farre differing." [5]

But this was not all. The fortune-seekers soon found themselves lost in the tortuous mazes of the delta of the great river, and, had they not been fortunate in securing a native pilot, they "might haue wandred a whole yeare in that labyrinth of rivers."

"For I know all the earth [the great navigator writes without exaggeration in this instance] doth not yeeld the like confluence of streams and branches, the one crossing the other so many times, and all so faire and large and so like one to another, as no man can tell which to take; and if we went by the

[5] Op. cit., p. 10.

HOUSES OF THE INDIANS ON THE LOWER ORINOCO

Raleigh called these Indians Tinitinas, and states that during the winter, when the river is in flood, "they dwell upon the trees, where they build very artificiall townes and villages." This story of Raleigh's, which had no more foundation in fact than many of his other yarns, was generally accepted as true until only a few years ago. Even the great Humboldt, who never visited the delta of the Orinoco, repeats the story with embellishments of his own.

sunne or compasse, hoping thereby to go directly one way or another, yet that waie we were also carried in a circle amongst multitudes of Ilands and every Iland so bordered with high trees as no man could see any farther than the bredth of the riuer or length of the breach." [6]

Then, in addition to this difficulty, there was the powerful current of the river to overcome, which they struggled against until they were so exhausted that they were on the verge of despair. Finally, however, after fifteen days of hardships that can be fully appreciated only by one who has visited this part of the world, the intrepid band emerged from the labyrinth of the delta and caught their first view of the Orinoco in all its impressive grandeur and majesty. Had they been better advised, they might have reached the river in the ships which they had left be-

[6] Op. cit., p. 46.

hind them, for the Orinoco is navigable by ocean vessels for hundreds of miles, and they would have covered the distance, which cost them so many days, in a comparatively short time and with far less effort.

Raleigh's eyes at last rested on the waters of the river of which he had so often dreamed —the river that was to bear him to

"that mighty, rich, and beautiful Empire of Guiana and to that great and golden citie which the Spanyards call El Dorado and the naturals Manoa—to a country which hath more quantity of gold, by manifolde, than the best partes of the Indies of Peru."

For years Raleigh had been devouring every document he could lay his hands on that had any reference to El Dorado. He had questioned every seaman who had been in the New World with a view to securing all the knowledge possible respecting the precise

location and extent and riches of the great Empire of Guiana. He had consulted the Indians in Trinidad and along the banks of the Orinoco, and had succeeded in inducing his prisoner, Berrio, to impart to him all the knowledge he had regarding the country which he purposed offering to his Queen. And now, after all this preparation, there could be no longer any doubt of the success of his enterprise. Further incredulity would be tantamount to denying the validity of human testimony and the evidence of the senses. "For on the fifteenth day," as he assures us, "we discouered a farre off the mountaines of Guiana, to our great joy."

Moreover, did not his captive De Berrio, who pompously styled himself the governor of Trinidad, Guiana, and El Dorado, have actually in his possession documentary evidence of the vast treasures of Manoa? Had he not the testimony of one, Juan Martines,

who had spent seven months in this great city—being lodged and entertained all the while in the Emperor's own palace? And had not this eyewitness, in speaking of the magnitude of the city, solemnly averred on his deathbed that "he entered the city at noon, and that he traveled al that daie til night thorow the citie and the next daie from sun rising to sun setting ere he came to the palace of the Inga"? Had he not been a spectator of the abundance of gold which its inhabitants possessed? And had he not beheld "the images of gold in their temples, the plates, armors, and shields of gold which they use in the wars"? Had he not noted that "the people of Manoa were marueylous great drunkardes," and that "at times of their solemne feasts, when the Emperor carowseth with his captayns, tributaries and gouernours—all those that pledge him are stripped naked, and have their bodies anoynted al ouer, with a kind of white bal-

SECTION OF RALEIGH'S MAP OF GUIANA

The locations of the Lake and City of Manoa are here shown. The geographer Hondius who constructed his map of Guiana shortly after Raleigh's return from his first expedition, locates Lake Parime, or Dorado, between latitudes 2° north and 1° 45′ south and makes it larger than the Caspian Sea. "I have beene assured," writes Raleigh, "by such of the Spanyardes as have seene Manoa, the emperiall Citie of Guiana, which the Spanyardes cal El Dorado, that for the greatnes, for the riches, and for the excellent seate, it farre exceedeth any of the world, at least of so much of the world as is knoen to the Spanish nation; it is founded upon a lake of salt water 200 leagues long like unto Mare Caspium."

samum," that "when they are anoynted all ouer, certaine seruants of the Emperor hauing prepared gold made into fine powder blew it thorow hollow canes upon their naked bodies untill they be al shining from the foote to the head" and that "in this sort they sit drinking by twenties and hundreds and continue in drunkeness sometimes six and seven daies together"?

Who could refuse to credit the assertions of such a keen observer and one who for seven months had the freedom of the city and had every opportunity for knowing whereof he spoke—assertions made by Martines in his dying hour, when he could have had no reason for untruthfulness or deception? And had not the asseverations of Martines been fully substantiated by divers Spanish letters which had been intercepted at sea by Capt. Popham only the year before Raleigh's arrival in Guiana? And, furthermore, did not the various caciques, whom

he interrogated as he ascended the Orinoco, fully corroborate the information contained in these letters as well as the statements of Berrio and Martines? No, unless one were prepared to reject all evidence, of what character soever, as utterly untrustworthy, there could be no longer any question about the existence of Manoa and the priceless treasures it was said to contain.

These astounding declarations coming from so many quarters were accepted by Raleigh as indisputable facts and roused him to an uncontrollable fever of expectancy. Toward the south his delighted eyes descried the peaks of the *sierras* of Picatoa and Imataca. These eminences enchained his fancy, for they looked down upon the great city which was the object of his quest.

It was "founded upon a lake of salt water two hundred leagues long like unto Mare Caspium, and for the greatness, for the

From De Bry

ANOMAIA INDIANS SUPPLYING RALEIGH WITH PROVISIONS

riches, and for the excellent seate, it farre exceedeth any of the world."

He was so sure of all this that in his chart of Guiana, executed about this time, and which is still preserved in the British Museum, he gives the exact location of this great lake and its rich capital city on its eastern shore.

And that his readers may have an adequate conception of the riches of Guiana, which "hath more abundance of Golde than any part of Peru, and as many or more great Cities than euer Peru had when it flourished most," and realize the magnificence of the "emperiall Citie of Guiana," he compares it with the court of Huayna Capac during the palmiest days of the Inca dynasty.

Quoting from Gomara's "Historia General de las Indias," he writes:

"All the vessels of his home, table and kitchen were of gold and siluer and the

meanest of siluer and copper for strength and hardiness of the metal. He had in his wardroppe hollow statutes of golde which seemed giants, and the figures in proportion and bignes of all the beasts, birdes, trees, and hearbes that the earth bringeth forth; and of all the fishes that the sea or the waters of his kingdom breedeth. Hee also had ropes, budgets, chests, and troughs of golde and siluer, heaps of billets of golde that seemed woode, marked out to burne. Finally there was nothing in his country, whereof hee had not the counterfeat in gold." [7]

Reveling thus in visions of wealth beyond human computation—wealth which he felt sure was at last within his grasp—is it matter for wonder that the credulous and perfervid adventurer toiled up the impetuous

[7] Cf. "Historia General de las Indias," p. 232, por Francisco Lopez de Gomara, Tom. XXII, of the "Biblioteca de Autores Españoles," Madrid (1877).

river radiant with delight; that every sign was for him a happy omen, and that every stone he "stooped to take up promised eyther golde or siluer by his complexion"; that the land with which he was finally in touch was of a truth "the Magazin of all rich mettels"?

"There never was," as his countryman, Sir Frederick Treves, has recently declared, "a more romantic river voyage; never a more rapturous wild-goose chase. Raleigh was infinitely gullible. He believed every word the romance-loving Spaniards told him as if he had been a gaping schoolboy. He trusted Juan Martines as a modern traveler trusts Baedeker. He gathered inspiration and assurance from any dull-witted Indian who nodded 'yes' to the unintelligible questions of his interpreter." [8]

Raleigh's venture was as abortive as had been all preceding expeditions in quest of El

[8] "The Cradle of the Deep," p. 76, by Sir Frederick Treves, London (1908).

Dorado, but he would own to no failure. After reaching the river Caroni, a tributary of the Orinoco, and "sounding" an old Indian chieftain regarding the army of the emperor of Guiana, while some of his "captaines garoused of his (the chief's) wine till they were reasonable pleasant," he concluded that it would be unsafe to invade the Inca's empire without a much larger force than he then had under his command. Besides this, he learned that there was a detachment of Spanish troops coming against him from Caracas and New Granada, and being short of ammunition, he judged it the better part of valor to rejoin his squadron at Trinidad with the least possible delay.

Shortly afterwards he was back in England, where his reception was far different from what he thought it would be on his departure thence six months before. Then he confidently expected to return with his ships laden with treasure, and to be restored to the

THE EWAIPANOMAS

These, says Raleigh, were a nation of people "whose heades appeare not above their shoulders, which, though it may be thought a meere fable, yet for mine owne parte I am resolved it is true. * * * They are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders and their mouths in the middle of their breasts, and that a long train of haire groweth backward between their shoulders." Shakespeare had apparently read Raleigh's work, as is evinced from the following well-known passage:

> The cannibals, that each other eat,
> The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow between their shoulders.

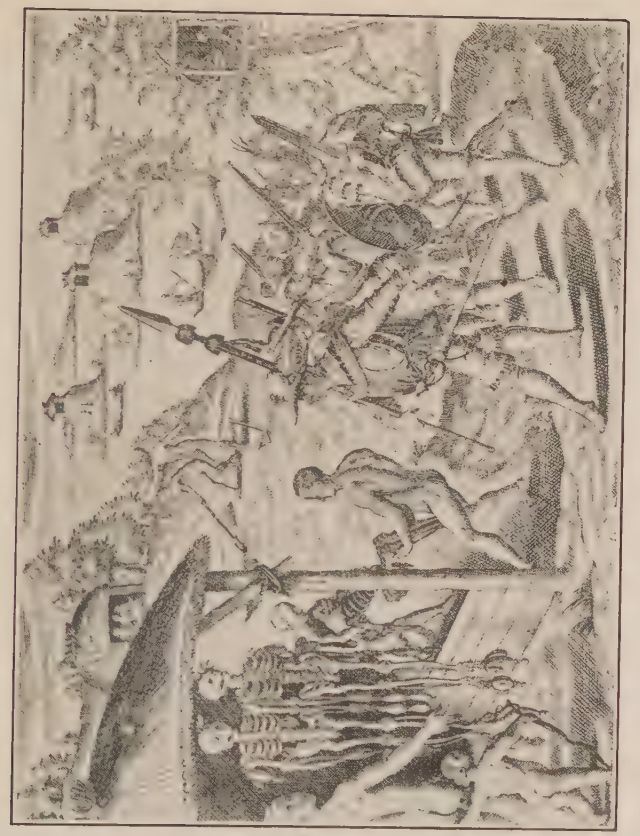
favor of his Queen by announcing that he had added to her diadem what was thenceforth to constitute its most precious jewel—the great and beautiful empire of Guiana. So far was this from being the case that, not counting the great monetary losses incurred by his luckless venture, he returned discredited, a target for criticism, and a butt of contumely and ridicule. Some went so far as to assert that he had never accompanied his squadron to Guiana, and that during its absence he had been lurking in Cornwall. They declared further that the more valuable ores which had been brought home to be assayed in London were originally "had from Barbary and were carried to Guiana," while only the comparatively worthless marcasite, which was among the ores submitted to the assayer, was a native product of the much vaunted land of El Dorado. It was to answer these and similar allegations that he

published his famous "Discoverie of Guiana."

But notwithstanding the hapless issue of his first venture, Raleigh still persisted in maintaining Guiana to be a "magazine of all rich metals," and to contain within its "boundaries the greatest assurance of good ever offered to any Christian princes." He insisted in the most solemn manner that he had "propounded no vaine thinge" in this report regarding the land of "Manoa the Golden." The enterprise in which he had embarked he continued to asseverate to be "fesible and certayne." [9]

"I asure my sealf," he writes to Sir Robert Cecil, "that ther ar not more diamoundes in the East Indies than ar to be founde in Guiana." And writing to the Earl of Holderness regarding a second expedition which he was to have depart for Guiana without delay, he does not hesitate to declare, "If I

[9] Edwards, ut sup., Vol. II, p. 393.



From Gottfriedt

STRANGE CUSTOMS OF THE TINITINAS

Writing of the Tinitinas, who dwell on trees, Raleigh declares that when their lords die and the flesh has fallen from their bones their relatives "take up the carcaise againe and hang it in the Cacique's house that died and decke his skull with feathers of all colours, and hang all his gold plates about the bones of his armes, thighes, and legges * * * and do use to beat the bones of their lords into powder, and their wives and friends drinke it in their severall sorts of drinks."

bringe them not"—the members of the expedition—"to a mountaine covered with golde and siluer oare, let the commander have commissione to cut off my head ther."

Eager, however, as was Raleigh to revisit the land of El Dorado, an interval of twenty-one years elapsed between his first and second expeditions. Twelve of these years were spent in the Tower of London, where he was confined on a charge of treason. When he regained his liberty he was sixty-three years of age, but his spirit in the face of a foredoomed enterprise, the difficulties of which were past counting, was as undaunted as ever.

But it is noteworthy that the object of his quest in this second expedition—at least so far as concerns his public announcement of it—is no longer the conquest of the rich land of El Dorado and the possession of the famed city of Manoa, where "ther ar store of gold images of forty-seven hundred

weight and worth a hundred thousand pounds each," but a certain mine which it was reported would "swell all England with gold." There is no reason, however, to believe that he had lost faith in Manoa or El Dorado, but he had learned by sad experience that his countrymen were disposed to regard these as too chimerical for safe business ventures. A gold mine, or, that failing, a plate fleet, was something more tangible and something that appealed more strongly to the money-loving but conservative men with whom he now had to deal.[10]

If this mine proved to be all that Raleigh fancied, it would, he reasoned, pave the way for the next step—the culmination of his

[10] It was while talking with Lord Bacon about the terms of his commission from King James that Raleigh made his famous reply to Bacon's question: "What will you do, if after all this expenditure, you miss of the gold mines?" "We shall then look after the Plate Fleet, to be sure." "But, then you will be pirates." "Ah, who ever heard of men being pirates for millions?"

life work—the conquest and annexation of El Dorado to "the crowne imperiall of the Realme of England." Then, the dreamer dreamed, one would see the Queen's dominions "exceedingly enlarged and the realm of England inestimably enriched." Then would there be in London a "contration house of more receipt for Guiana than there is nowe in Seville for the West Indies." Then would England's ruler be the greatest and richest of sovereigns. Then would the Spaniards cease to "threaten us with any more invincible Armadas," and then, finally, would Raleigh himself, firmly seated on the throne of the Inca of Manoa, as governor general of the great empire of Guiana, be in a position to defy the Spaniard—that arch enemy of his country—and England would thenceforward be "unresistable both on land and on sea."

It is beside my purpose to follow Raleigh in his last ill-starred venture; to tell how

"evil chance brooded over the expedition from the outset"; how dire calamities fell thickly upon the tempest-tossed, plague-stricken adventurers as they approached the shores of Guiana; how the indomitable leader, prostrate with fever, saw his strength ebb from him; how, after the death of his idolized son, he was obliged to abandon the scheme of his life's imagining; and how, instead of witnessing the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream, he was forced to acknowledge the complete frustration of all his hopes; how, in face of the tragic issue of the enterprise on which he had staked fortune, reputation, life, he was on the verge of dying of a broken heart;[11] how he returned to

[11] In a letter to his wife, in which he informs her of their son's tragic death, he writes as follows: "I protest before the Majestie of God that as Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins died hartbroken when they failed of their enterprise, I could willingly doe the like did I not contend against sorrowe for your sake in hope to provide somewhat for you, and to com-

Map of Guiana by Theodor de Bry, 1599

This map is of special interest, as it exhibits many of the places mentioned by Raleigh in his "Discoverie of Guiana," especially Manoa, Parime, and the region occupied by the headless men.

I. Amapaia; rich in gold. The water of this region is good at midday, but in the evening, and especially at midnight, it is very poisonous. II. Iwaipanoma. In this locality, according to Raleigh, live people without heads. III. Iwarawakeri. These mountains are rich in gold. The sands of the rivers flowing into Lake Cassipa also carry much gold. IV. Manoa or Dorado. This is considered to be the largest city in the entire world. V. Lake Parime. It is 200 miles long, has salt water, and there are many islands in it. VI. Region occupied by the women called Amazons. VII. Arwackas. Friends of the Spaniards. VIII. The people living on the Essekebe River can go by boat from the mouth of the river to within a day's journey of Lake Parime. IX-X. A headless man and an Amazon.

London to face the opprobrium which his failure entailed; how, charged with piracy, his long and tumultuous career was, at the instance of Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, finally brought to an ignominious close under the headsman's ax in Old Palace yard.

"Poor self-befooled Raleigh," writes Sir Frederick Treves, "he left more gold in this miserable country than he ever brought away from it, for he gave to any loquacious chief who would listen to his babblings an honest English sovereign—a piece of 'the new money, of twenty shillings, with Her Majesty's picture.' It would have indeed been well for the gallant dreamer if he had left Guiana forever to the sun." [12]

fort and relieve you." (Edwards, Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 360.

[12] Op. cit. p. 77.

CHAPTER IX

PERSISTENCE OF BELIEF IN EL DORADO

Raleigh's ill-fated expedition of 1617 was the last of the great ventures in quest of El Dorado. The expeditions that were subsequently fitted out—and there were many of them—were of minor importance and attracted but little attention. But like all preceding attempts they, too, issued in failure or catastrophe.

Yet, notwithstanding the long record of adventures and disasters, which extended through more than a century, men still continued to believe in Manoa and Lake Parime and El Dorado as firmly as ever. Raleigh, in his map executed about 1595, had fixed the location of the capital of the Gilded Prince on the eastern shore of Lake Manoa, and subsequent cosmographers kept it on

A Reported Scene on the Spanish Main

their maps for more than two hundred years. In his map of 1599, which is adorned with figures of a giant Amazon and of one of the headless men described by Raleigh, De Bry places Manoa on the north of Lake Parime —Raleigh had located it on the east—with the interesting caption: *Manoa oder Dorado, dise wirdt geacht fur di groste Stadt in der ganzen welt*—(Manoa or Dorado regarded as the largest city in the entire world). De Laet, in his map of 1630, moves Manoa or El Dorado to the west end of the lake just opposite the position assigned it by Raleigh. Blaeuw, in his maps of 1640-1667, follows de Laet, as does also Sanson in 1650 and 1656. In Surville's map of 1778, Lake Parime, in addition to the designation by which it had been so long known, bears a new name, Mar Eldorado, the golden sea. Even as late as 1806, after Humboldt had proved that the lake, about which so much had been imagined and written, was only a myth, we

find it still on the map of Depons with a distinct indication of the city of El Dorado, Raleigh's "rich and magnificent" city of Manoa. And yet more. So late as 1844 a work entitled "El Dorado" was published in New York by a Mr. Van Heuvel, who had visited the coast region of Guiana, in which he contends that Humboldt had effaced the wondrous lake without sufficient grounds. In the map illustrating his book, Lake Parime, under the name of the White Sea of the Manoas, still figures as prominently as ever and in the exact location assigned it by Raleigh two and a half centuries before.

Nor is this all. Even today, in parts of Venezuela and Colombia, the belief still prevails that somewhere, in the vast and unexplored region between the Orinoco and the Amazon, one may yet find the ruins of the famed city of El Dorado, and that there is still waiting there under the débris of crum-

SPANIARDS SEEKING GOLD *From Colijn*

bled palaces treasures as great as any ever found in the *huacas* of Peru and New Granada.

A similar belief likewise obtains in certain parts of Peru and Bolivia regarding the former existence of a rich city and empire somewhere in the forest region to the east of the Andes and to the south of the Amazon. This imaginary empire, which was supposed to be greater even than that of the Incas on the Andean plateau, was, according to tradition, founded by a younger brother of Atahualpa after the conquest of the Children of the Sun by Francisco Pizarro. He was known by various names, sometimes being called Enim or Great Paru, at others the Gran Moxo or Great Paytiti. It was reported in Lima, by one who declared that he had been in the capital of this mighty empire, that no fewer than three thousand artisans were employed in the Street of the Silversmiths, and that in the

neighborhood of this marvelous city there was a hill of silver and another of gold. The columns of the palace, it was averred, were of alabaster and porphyry, the galleries of cedar and ebony, while the throne was of ivory, and was reached by steps of gold.

When Martin del Barco Centenera, about the time of Raleigh's expedition to Guiana, was writing his metrical chronicle, "La Argentina," in which he records the events of the conquests of the regions bordering the Rio de la Plata, a report was circulated in Paraguay that the capital of the Gran Moxo had actually been discovered. Don Martin gives the information as authentic and expresses his regret that Cabeza de Vaca, the first explorer of the Paraguay, had not proceeded farther up the river. For, if he had, the poet-chronicler asserts, he certainly would have been the fortunate discoverer of the capital of the Gran Moxo, whose palace stood on an island in a lake. In richness

and magnificence this city, it was declared, eclipsed anything narrated of the splendors of Mexico or Cuzco and could be compared only with some of the fabled cities of Palmerian romance or Oriental story. "It was," we are informed, "built of white stone. At the entrance were two towers and between them a column five and twenty feet in height. On its top was a large silver moon, and two living lions were fastened to its base with chains of gold. Having passed these guardians one came into a quadrangle planted with trees and watered by a silver fountain, which spouted through four golden pipes. The gate of the palace was of copper. It was very small and its bolt was received in the solid rock. Within, a golden sun was placed upon an altar of silver, and four lamps were kept burning before it day and night." [1]

[1] "La Argentina," Cap. V, Buenos Aires (1836). In Vol. V of "Coleccion de Obras y Documentos

Even today, I was frequently assured while traveling in the tablelands of southern Peru, the descendants of the people formerly ruled over by the Gran Moxo still survive in large numbers and are said to possess fabulous wealth in hidden stores and precious stones. They occasionally, I was told, visit some of the towns on the plateau, but they are always secretive about everything and are quite unwilling to give any information whatever respecting their manner of life or place of abode.

Relativos a la Historia Antigua y Moderna de las Provincias del Rio de la Plata." Cf. the author's "South America's Southland," pp. 446-448.

CHAPTER X

REASONS FOR THE PERSISTENCE OF BELIEF IN EL DORADO

It would be difficult to name any other myth that has had a stronger hold on mankind or one that has been more remarkable for its longevity than that of El Dorado. Notwithstanding the countless disasters to which it lured so many thousand people of divers nations, notwithstanding that every expedition was an absolute failure, and that the last adventurer never got any nearer the object of his quest than did Belalcazar or Orellana, the fortune-hunter was not disenchanted. The spell of El Dorado was over Spaniard and German and Englishman alike, and, although it was as unattainable as the flitting rainbow, they, nevertheless, continued for generations its eager pursuit.

Belalcazar sought for it on the plateau of Cundinamarca, Pizarro and Orellana in the forests of Canela and along the banks of the Amazon. The Quesadas searched for it in the eastern declivities of the Andes, and, not finding it there, continued their pursuit of it in the dark recesses of the dense tropical jungles between the Meta and the Caqueta. To secure so great a prize Von Hutten, Martin de Proveda and Pedro de Silva wandered over the llanos of Venezuela and New Granada and struggled through the interminable wilds that intervene between Chachapoyas and the Caribbean. Ursua and Aguirre and Antonio de Berrio in their quest of the same chimera crossed the continent from west to east, and braved countless tribes of hostile aborigines. But their fate was the same as that of their disenchanted predecessors. For, after untold hardships and the performance of fabulous feats of valor, they were, at the end of their

long and arduous journeys, no nearer the objects of their quest than when they first embarked in their fantastic and soul-stirring enterprises.

No difficulty deterred them, no danger, however great, appalled them. Snowclad mountains, sunburnt plains, pestilential morasses, treacherous rivers, drenching rains that "penetrated to their souls," famine, poisoned arrows, imminent death of the most horrible kind, had no terrors for those extraordinary adventurers who knew not fear and who continued to march and fight even to their last breath, or, as an old chronicler has it, *con el alma en los dientes*—with their souls between their teeth. Not finding El Dorado on the tablelands of the Muiscas, where they were led to believe he resided, they followed the indications of the next idle rumor and sought him among the distant Omaguas in the valleys of the Caqueta and the Putumayo. They pushed their way

time and again through the length and the breadth of the inhospitable *montaña* from Lake Maracaibo to the lower rapids of the Huallaga, and explored the tributaries of the Amazon and the Orinoco from the Andes to the Rio Negro and the Caroni, and still no Gilded King, no palaces of gold, no precious stones. Never since their time has this part of South America been so thoroughly explored and never has every nook and corner of it been so minutely scrutinized.

But the golden, man-devouring phantom "whose maw was never satiated with the souls of heroes"; the phantom, "so possible, so probable to imaginations which were yet reeling before the actual and veritable prodigies of Peru, Mexico, and the East Indies," still lured them on from one part of the continent to another. The failure of expedition after expedition, the tragic death of thousands, with their whitened bones strewn

From Theodor de Bry's "Collectiones Peregrinationum in Indian Orientalem et Occidentalem"

SOME OF THE STRANGE ANIMALS OF THE NEW WORLD

over mountain and plain, never served as a warning against new ventures, and never called a halt to the wanton sacrifice of life to the gilded Minotaur. It is, therefore, not surprising that many people thought of those who took part in these enterprises what Oviedo, describing the hardships of the earliest voyage up the Meta, writes of Alonso de Herrera and his companions, "I do not believe that any of those who took part in this expedition would have taken so much trouble to get into Paradise."

There was at the time of the conquest of Peru a tradition current that one of the younger brothers of the Inca had, with a large army, carrying with it untold treasures, fled to the region to the east of the Andes and taken possession of a vast territory somewhere between the Amazon and the Orinoco. The fortune-hunters accepted without question the truth of this tradition, and failure to locate the object of their

quest on the uplands of New Granada or in the lowlands at the foot of the eastern Cordilleras, far from indicating that they were pursuing a chimera, simply proved that they had to seek the self-expatriated Incas farther eastward. Thus it was that they suddenly changed their field of operations from the mythical Dorado of the Omaguas to the equally mythical Dorado of Parime, nearly a thousand miles nearer the rising sun. The region surrounding Raleigh's imaginary lake was still wholly unknown and here, then, near the headwaters of the Caroni, it was confidently asserted, the long and eagerly sought king of the Golden City was at last to be found. Even as late as 1775 the governor of Spanish Guiana was induced to send an expedition in the direction of the reputed Lake Parime in quest of El Dorado. Of this expedition only one man, Don Antonio Solis, returned alive. He is interesting as being probably the last

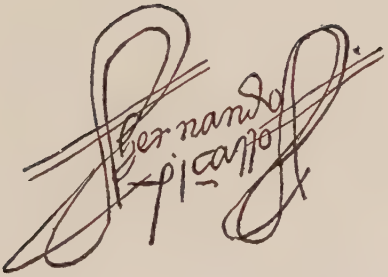
member of an expedition sent out under government auspices, nearly two and a half centuries after the story of El Dorado was first given currency by the roving Indian at Latacunga on the plain of Quito, a story which, according to Southey in his "History of Brazil," "cost Spain a greater expense of life and treasure than all her conquests in the New World." [2]

We smile at what we are pleased to consider the folly of those who went in pursuit of that which to us was a mere will-o'-the-wisp, and are disposed to characterize them as Hume, in his "History of England," does Raleigh—as "capable of the most extravagant credulity or the most impudent imposture"—as visionaries who were "extremely defective either in solid understanding or morals, or both." [3]

And, as we read of "the countless expe-

[2] Vol. I, p. *393*, London (1822).
[3] Vol. IV, pp. *533-534*, Boston (1854).

ditions of the Spaniards in pursuit of a phantom, we are inclined to regard them as a nation of fantastic adventurers of the type of Don Quixote. But we forget that they were confronted with a world of marvels where nothing was considered impossible. The reports which had reached them concerning El Dorado seemed more reliable than were those which led Columbus to the discovery of the New World. In that age of illusions, in which many things had been realized that before had been deemed impossible, the unbridled imagination wandered in an interminable region of chimeras; and, in the midst of privations and dangers, men sustained themselves on that which most harmonized with their ideas, or most flattered their hopes. The unexpected spectacle of the vast treasures found in the temples and palaces of the Incas inflamed the desires and perverted the judgment of those lucky adventurers, who, not content with the rich



Facsimile signature of Friar Gaspar Carvajal

fruits of their victories, promised themselves to multiply them by extending the sphere of their conquests." [4]

And we forget, also, that at the time when Belalcazar and Orellana, Von Hutten, and the Quesadas went in quest of El Dorado only a small part of the New World had been explored. And yet in this small part two rich and powerful empires had been discovered. We forget that Cortes and Pizarro, following the slight indications afforded by small quantities of gold in the possession of savages on the coast, were led to engage in those famous enterprises which made them masters of the great empires of the Montezumas and of the Children of the Sun.

And what more natural than to suppose that in the unexplored portions of the Western Hemisphere there were similar, possibly even greater, empires? If a second Mexico

[4] See the author's "Through South America's Southland," p. 360.

had been discovered in the territory of the Omaguas or a second Peru had been found in the region surrounding Lake Parime, what matter would there have been to the El Doradoist for surprise? None whatever. Even we of today would applaud the wisdom of those whose persistence in following the indications at hand was ultimately rewarded with success. For nothing was asserted of Manoa and the capital of the Omaguas which had not been proved to be true of Mexico and Cuzco or which had not been witnessed by "the corporal and mortal eyes" of many of the adventurers who took part in the earlier expeditions in search of El Dorado.

Mexico was located in the center of a lake. Why not Manoa? The religion of the Muiscas was connected with a sacred lake. Why not that of Manoa? It was avouched that the greater part of the vast treasure of the Incas had been secreted by the priests of

Peru and that many members of the blood royal had sought refuge beyond the Andes, and what more reasonable than to suppose that a remnant of the treasure of the great Inca dynasty was still in existence?

No, we have no reason to plume ourselves on our superior knowledge, when this knowledge has been acquired at the expense and the labor of those whom we are now wont to regard as phantom-chasers or the self-deluded victims of a credulous fancy. Had we lived in their day "we should have belonged either to the many wise men who believed as they did, or to the many foolish men who not only sneered at the story of El Dorado but at a hundred other stories which we now know to be true."

CHAPTER XI

MODERN DORADOISTS

It is often asserted that the story of El Dorado was devised by the wily Indians as a means of getting rid of the Spanish invaders or to lure them to the lands of other tribes with whom they were at war.

"It is true," as I have written elsewhere,[1] "that the lust of gold often made the Spaniards the dupes of the Indians who, in order to get rid of their unwelcome guests, regaled them with stories of powerful cities and exhaustless supplies of the precious metals in the depths of the tropical forests and in lands far distant from their own. It was thus that they sent the Spaniards on a

[1] "Through South America's Southland," pp. 361 and 362. New York (1916).

wild-goose chase after the Gran Quivira, a flourishing empire in New Mexico, which, it was averred, had been established there by one of the heirs of Montezuma. It was thus that they started hosts of adventurers in search of the Gran Paytiti, somewhere between Peru and Brazil, where, it was said, the Incas, with a large number of followers and untold treasures, had fled after the conquest of Cuzco by Pizarro. It was thus, too, that they were able to trick the most distinguished of the Conquistadores into organizing expedition after expedition to scour the whole continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic and from the Amazon to the Caribbean in search of the mythical El Dorado. This illusory being of fancy was at first declared by the Indians to be a Gilded Man, but in the course of years, was, in the imaginations of the eager and credulous Spanish, transformed into a city and then into a coun-

try whose treasures of gold were beyond the dreams of oriental fable."

But even granting that many, if not most of the Doradoists were the dupes of lying Indians whose tales respecting the Gilded Man "should never have been given the slightest credence, we must remember that it was the assertion of an Indian which enabled Balboa to make his epochal discovery of the great South Sea. It was an Indian who told Pizarro of the vast nation of the Incas and of the fabulous treasures of Cuzco. It was information furnished by Indians, regarding the wealth of the Aztecs and the Muiscas, that guided Cortes to the rich capital of Montezuma, and Quesada to the opulent plateau of Cundinamarca." [2]

Again, it is said that the Spaniard, ignorant of the language of the aborigines, was led to look for gold where the Indian had told him there was red earth. Or it is averred

[2] Op. cit., p. 361.

that the Indian was himself deceived and promised the European immense deposits of the precious metals where there was nothing but mica-schist or sulphides of iron and copper. Or, still again, it is declared that the extraordinary episode of South American history known as the quest of El Dorado is an instance of one of those mysterious aberrations of the human mind whose origin and continuance can be explained only by an expert in the psychology of history.

We need not, however, seek for any such recondite reasons for the explanation of the facts which have been the subject matter of the preceding pages. Fortune-seekers and adventurers in search of wealth to be secured without slow and monotonous toil have ever existed in the world and are in it still, engaged in schemes different only in name from that which so captivated the minds of men two and three centuries ago. And they, too—all of them—have their Dorado which

occasions the same feverish activity, the same intense excitement, the same eager desire to achieve fame and fortune as characterized the Conquistadores in their famous expeditions in quest of the Gilded King.

Sixty years ago it was in California, then known as the El Dorado of the West, and thither thousands flocked from all parts of the world in search of the same glittering metal that constituted such a lure for the Spaniards three centuries before. Later on, El Dorado was transferred to the frozen strands of the Yukon, and icebound Alaska witnessed a great army of passionate gold-hunters, much the same as those which long generations ago had pushed their way through the steaming jungles between the Orinoco and the Amazon. Again, El Dorado was in the veldt of southern Africa, where the Gilded Man—or was it the Golden Calf?—appeared under the form of the rich

gold nuggets of the Rand or of the sparkling gems of Kimberley. For others still, El Dorado is Wall Street or the Paris Bourse or Monte Carlo—any place where the acquisition of wealth is accompanied by the impelling stimulus of hazard and excitement.

Thus it is that El Dorado, who was originally a Gilded Chieftain on the plateau of New Granada or in the forest lakes of the Omaguas, or in the golden palace of Lake Parime, has become a mere synonym for any region or any enterprise that presents opportunities for easily acquired wealth. And thus, in its last analysis, we have all the history and all the psychology that are required to explain what to many has ever been an enigma—the strange fascination, for thousands, of that extraordinary *ignis fatuus* which has given us the most interesting and the most romantic episode in the conquest of tropical America.

Whether considered as an Indian chieftain, a city of vast riches, a land of untold treasures luring countless brave men to an untimely death, El Dorado could, in the words of Adolph Retté, truthfully declare:

Je suis l'Illusion, la Crainte, la Chimère;
Je suis la région où regnent les fantômes.

It cannot, of course, be denied that hidden treasure has, in all ages, possessed a peculiar and mysterious attraction not afforded by mine prospecting or stock speculating and that its very elusiveness has but enhanced the zest of the seeker of fortune. For even today the most staid representatives of our unromantic civilization are thrilled by the mere mention of the discovery of a pot of gold coin or of the reported location, by a New England fisherman or a New Jersey yokel, of one of Captain Kidd's long-buried chests filled with pieces of eight.

Who has not heard of the efforts that

have been made to find the tomb of Alaric the Goth, which is reputed to hold the accumulated treasure of Rome; to locate the cave in which Attila the Hun is said to have stored the loot which he gathered from the richest countries of Europe; to discover the untold wealth buried with Genseric the Vandal, after he had sacked the most opulent provinces of Italy? Who has not read of the attempts, dating from the time of the Spanish conquest, to drain Lake Urcos in Peru, and Lake Guativitá in Colombia, where it is still asserted and confidently believed that there are countless millions of Inca and Muisca treasure in the form of gold and precious stones? Who is ignorant of the numberless expeditions that have, for centuries past, been fitted out to recover the treasure of sunken galleons among the islands of the West Indies or along the coast of the Spanish Main? Who is not aware of the frantic search that has been made,

times without number, to secure the amassed treasures, estimated at $19,000,000, which are buried in the little island of Cocos, off the coast of Costa Rica; to get possession of the vast stores of gold in the ships sunk by Sir Francis Drake in the harbor of San Miguel, among the Azores, or in the hold of the treasure ship of the Spanish Armada, which went down in the harbor of Tobermory in Scotland and which, almost from that day to the present, has been an object of search by the treasure-mad mortals who have brought to their assistance every device from a simple diving outfit to the latest design of suction dredge? Who has not been impressed by the story of the tragic fate of the English frigate *La Lutrine,* which, over a century ago, was wrecked near the entrance to the Zuyder Zee, with more than £1,000,000 aboard, and which since the disaster has engaged and still engages the best engineering skill of the London Lloyds, who

have never ceased to regard the sunken treasure ship as a possible asset? And who has not been thrilled by the still more tragic and romantic story of the destruction, in 1702, in Vigo Bay, of the magnificent Spanish plate fleet, "The richest flota that ever came to Europe," with its cargo of gold ingots and silver bars, its fabulous hoards of ducats, doubloons, and pieces of eight, valued at more than $100,000,000, a treasure for whose recovery the Spanish nation and private corporations have for more than two centuries labored and still labor as assiduously and as hopefully as ever did the fortune-hunters of long years ago labor for the location of the ever-elusive El Dorado?

Even as I write these lines it is announced that the professor of archæology in one of our leading universities is preparing to go to Asia Minor to dig beneath the ruins of Sardis for the long-lost treasures of King Crœsus, who was reputed to be the richest man

of antiquity and whose name has for ages been synonymous with great wealth. The professor in question has already, in a preliminary exploration, unearthed many valuable objects in the former capital of the famed Lydian monarch. Among them are gold rings and bracelets and beautiful cups and intaglios of crystal and carnelian.

Among the vast treasures which the ancient plutocrat of Asia Minor was said to possess were countless statues—all of solid gold—of gods and heroes, which adorned his beautiful capital. They recall the statues of gold which Von Hutten and his companions reported as actually existing in the capital of the Omaguas—statues and stores of gold like those which Sir Walter Raleigh was sure were to be found in the magnificent capital of Manoa.

The surface of the soil on which the old Lydian capital was built has, we are assured, been merely scratched, and "there is every

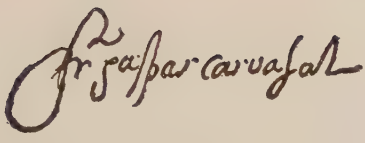
reason to believe that deep beneath the site of ancient Sardis lie stupendous hidden treasures of wrought gold such as explorers never found before, exceeding by far the vast wealth which Schliemann actually unearthed in the ruins of Troy"—wealth which greatly surpasses in amount the treasures which greeted the delighted eyes of the Spanish Conquistadores in the palaces of Cuzco and in the treasure chambers of the Great Chimu.

There is a Scotch legend of one Donald Claflin who rows along the rock-girt Caledonian coast, always seeking, never finding, the gold that lies in the graves of pagan chiefs and kings. This legend tells the tale of the treasure-hunter and epitomizes all that might be said about those wondrous expeditions that went in quest of El Dorado. The romance of the gold hunt is something that thrills even the most sedate and most matter-of-fact of men. Goethe's words—

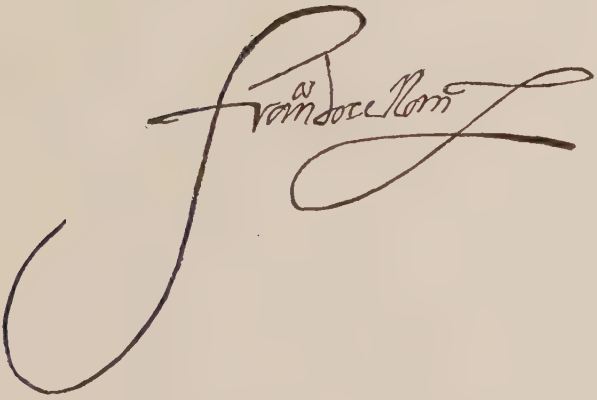
Nach Golde dränkt,
Am Golde hängt
Doch Alles—

may be adduced to show the potency of gold as a factor in human endeavor, but they only partially disclose the mainspring that impelled the Conquistadores—those extraordinary men "limitless in desire, limitless in industry, limitless in will"—to essay what we now know was as unfeasible as an attempt to ascend to the sun or the stars.

And, be it remembered, it was not solely the lust of gold for its own sake, which, in days gone by, sent the blood surging through the veins of the apathetic and worldly-wise Germans and Englishmen, as well as of the sentimental and romantic Spaniards, and led them to adventure fortune, health, and life in the most hazardous enterprises; but, over and above the desire of wealth, there was that seductive spirit of romance, as revealed in the "Palmerin de Oliva" and



Facsimile Signature of Friar Gaspar Carvajal, Historian of Orellana's Great Voyage of Discovery



Facsimile Signature of Francisco de Orellana

"Amadis of Gaul"—that love of glory, which so dominated the Spaniards of the conquest from the proudest *adelantado* of noblest birth to the lowest soldier of humblest origin.

But unlike our present seekers after buried treasures, the adventurers who went in quest of El Dorado, even though they failed in achieving the purpose which they had in view, contributed greatly to the advancement of geographic knowledge and to the progress of civilization. The region bounded by the Orinoco and the Amazon, the Andes, and the Rio Negro, has never since the conquest been so carefully explored as it was by the men who went in search of the Gilded King and the golden capital of the Omaguas. They traversed time and again many broad stretches of territory that have never since their time been visited by a single European. Like the old alchemists, who failed in their quest of the philoso-

pher's stone, but who by their experiments paved the way for the science of modern chemistry, the treasure-seeking adventurers, who so thoroughly examined the northern half of the South American continent, acted as the advance guard of civilization in a region that would otherwise have remained a *terra incognita* until our own day, as did vast areas to the south of the Amazon which were left untraversed by the white man until visited by explorers still living. They opened up to the colonist and the missionary the broad savannas and woodlands of the east of the great Andean chain and were thus indirectly instrumental in establishing those flourishing missions which, for generations, exerted so beneficent an influence in civilizing and Christianizing the aborigines that they commanded the admiration of the world.

And yet more. If we still have some knowledge of the manners and customs of

certain of the Indian races, now extinct, that formerly inhabited the vast territory drained by the Amazon, the Orinoco, and their tributaries; if we can still form a true mental picture of the conditions of the northern half of South America, as it was at the time of the Conquest, it is, thanks to those who spent so many years, at the cost of so much life and treasure, in the pursuit of that strange golden phantom, which, under the guise of a gilded king, a golden city, a country rich in precious metals, a lake with an aureate strand, lured on generation after generation of eager, resolute adventurers, and which, whether king or city, country or lake, holds its place in history under the name of El Dorado.

APPENDIX

The account of the fortuitous meeting of the three distinguished Conquistadores, Gonsalo Ximenes de Quesada, Nicholas Federmann and Sebastian de Belalcazar, is so remarkable that it reads like a chapter from the "Arabian Nights." All three of these gallant adventurers were, like so many of their contemporaries, ardent and indefatigable treasure hunters.

Federmann, before his singular rencounter with his Spanish rivals, had been vainly seeking the fabulous *Casa del Sol*—House of the Sun—which was said to be located somewhere east of the Andes—presumably in the valley of the Meta—and which, according to a report then current, was a storehouse of immense treasures of gold and precious stones.

Quesada, who, like his illustrious countryman, Hernando Cortes, was a man of marked literary attainments as well as a successful commander, had just completed the conquest of the Chibchas and had taken possession of all the treasures which he had found in their temples and elsewhere. And like the diplomatic and chivalrous Andalusian, Belalcazar, who had just arrived from distant Quito, in search of El Dorado, Quesada, too, although at a later period, was destined to win renown, if not fortune, as one of the most famous of the long list of those intrepid men who risked their all in the futile pursuit of the Gilded King.

So interesting and illuminating a sidelight do the characters and motives, jealousies and ambitions, hardships, achievements and disappointments of these three eminent Conquistadores, whom the lust of gold and conquest had so strangely brought together on the plain of Bogotá, throw on

the whole history of the quest of El Dorado, that I here reproduce, by way of appendix, what I have written on the subject in my "Up the Orinoco and Down the Magdalena." [1]

"Quesada had left Santa Marta in 1536, having under his command, according to Oviedo, eight hundred men and one hundred horses. He went part of the way by land and part by the Rio Grande, now known as the Magdalena. After reaching the Opon, he followed that river as far as it was navigable, and eventually made his way to the plateau of Bogotá—the land of the Chibchas.

"His march was, in some respects, the most difficult and remarkable in the annals of the Conquest. He had to contend against relentless savages, dismal swamps and almost impenetrable forests, where he had to cut his way through the tangled vines and

[1] Chap. X, p. 294-299.

bushes and where it was often impossible to make more than a league a day. His men were decimated by disease and starvation. When he at last arrived at the Valle de Alcazares, near the present site of Bogotá, he could count but one hundred infantry and sixty cavalry. But with this handful of men he had conquered the Chibcha nation, numbering, according to the old chroniclers, one million people and having twenty thousand soldiers in the field. Scarcely, however, was his campaign against the aborigines successfully terminated, when information was conveyed him of a new danger in the person of a German competitor, who had just arrived from the llanos.

"Five years previously, Federmann, in the service of the Welsers, had left Coro in Venezuela, with four hundred well-armed and well-provisioned men. After wandering over trackless plains and through dark and almost impenetrable forests, enduring

frightful hardships of all kinds, he finally got word of the Chibchas and of their treasures of gold and precious stones. He forthwith changed his route and crossed the eastern Cordilleras, where the traveler André assures us it is now absolutely impossible to pass.

"Thus, almost before Quesada was aware that Federmann was in the country, he was constrained by policy to receive him and his one hundred ragged and famished followers —these were all that remained of his gallant band—as his guests. The Spanish Conquistador knew that the German leader would put in a claim for a part of the territory that they had both been exploring, and which, until then, each of them had regarded as his own by right of conquest. He was then naturally eager to effect a settlement with his competitor on the best terms possible and get him out of the country with the least possible delay. Federmann agreed to

renounce all his claims in consideration of his receiving himself the sum of ten thousand pesos and of having his soldiers enjoy all the rights of discoverers and Conquistadores accorded to those of Quesada.

"Scarcely, however, had these negotiations been happily terminated when another and a more formidable rival appeared on the scene, on his way from the distant South. This was Sebastian de Belalcazar, the famous lieutenant of Francisco Pizarro. He was then governor of Quito and the conqueror of much of the territory now included in Ecuador and southern Columbia. Hearing casually of El Dorado and of the marvelous riches this ruler was reputed to possess, the Spanish chieftain lost no time in organizing an expedition to the country of gold and emeralds, of fertile plains and delightful valleys. Setting out with the assurance of an early and easy victory, and of soon becoming the possessors of untold

wealth and all the enjoyment that wealth could command, the soldiers, in quest of El Dorado, exclaimed with unrestrained enthusiasm:

> " '*Nuestros sean su oro y sus placeres,*
> *Gocemos de ese campo y ese sol.*' [2]

"But anticipation is not fruition. This the Spaniard soon learned to his sorrow. Like Quesada and Federmann and their followers, Belalcazar and his men had to endure frightful hardships during the long and painful march of many months from Quito to the plateau of Bogotá. According to Castellanos, who wrote while many of these adventurers were living, and who had received from them directly an account of their privations and sufferings and the countless obstacles that at times rendered progress almost impossible, their journeys were made through mountains and districts that

[2] 'Ours be his gold and his pleasures,
Let us enjoy that land, that sun.'

were inaccessible and uninhabitable, through gloomy forests and dense, tangled underbrush; through inhospitable lands and dismal swamps, where there was neither food nor shelter for man or beast.

"This extraordinary and accidental meeting of the three Conquistadores, coming from such great distances, from three different points of the compass, is one of the most interesting episodes in the history of the Conquest. It was a critical moment for the Europeans. If they had failed to agree, and had turned their arms against one another, those who would have escaped alive would have been at the mercy of the Indians who would at once have rallied their forces to repel the invaders. But, fortunately, wise councils prevailed and a clash was averted.

" 'While the clergy and the religious,' writes Acosta, 'were going to and from the different camps endeavoring to prevent a rupture, the three parties of Spaniards, com-

ing from points so distant, and now occupying the three apices of a triangle, whose sides measured three or four leagues, presented a singular spectacle. Those from Peru were clad in scarlet cloth and silk and wore steel helmets and costly plumes. Those from Santa Marta had cloaks, linens and caps made by the Indians. Those, however, from Venezuela, like refugees from Robinson Crusoe's island, were covered with the skins of bears, leopards, tigers and deer. Having journeyed more than thirteen hundred leagues through uninhabited lands, they had experienced the most cruel hardships. They arrived poor, naked and reduced to one-fourth of their original number.

" 'The three chiefs,' continues Acosta, 'were among the most distinguished men that ever came to America. Belalcazar, son of a woodman of Extremadura, attained by his talents and valor the reputation of being one of the most celebrated Conquistadores

of South America and was endowed in a degree far above the other two with political tact and observing genius. As soon as he became aware of the agreement entered into between Quesada and Federmann, he nobly waived his rights, and declined to accept the sum which Quesada offered him. He stipulated only that his soldiers should not be prevented from returning to Peru, when they might desire to do so, or when Pizarro should demand them, and that Captain Juan Cabrera should return to found a town in Neiva, a territory which, along with Timana, was to be under the government of Popayan, which it was his intention to solicit from the Emperor. In the meantime he agreed to accompany Quesada to Spain.'

"The three went to Spain together, as had been arranged, each of them confident of receiving from the Spanish monarch a reward commensurate with his labors and services to the Crown. Each one aspired to the

governorship of new Granada and used all his influence to secure the coveted prize.

"The net result of their efforts was a sad experience of the vanity of human wishes. All were disappointed in their expectations. The guerdon all so eagerly strove for was awarded to another who had taken no part in the conquest that had rendered the three aspirants to royal favor so famous.

"Only Belalcazar received any recognition whatever. He was made adelantado of Popayan and the surrounding territory. As for Quesada and Federmann they fell into disfavor. The latter soon disappeared from public view entirely, but long afterwards Quesada was able to return to the land where he had won so many laurels. And it was fitting that, after his death, his remains should repose in the noble cathedral that adorns the capital of which he was the founder.

"In adventure and achievement, the three

Conquistadores above mentioned take rank with Cortes, Pizarro and Orellana. Given a Homer, their wanderings and deeds would afford themes for three Odysseys of intense and abiding interest. Given even an Ercilla, we should have a literary monument, which, in romantic episode and dramatic effect, would eclipse the *Araucana,* the nearest approach to an epic that South America has yet produced."

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